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THE HISTORY OF JESUS.

Drawn up

For the INSTRUCTION of

CHILDREN.

By W. MASON.

Train up a Child in the Way he should go, PROV. xxii. 6.

Jesus saith, I am the Way, JOHN xiv. 6.

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THE

PREFACE.

THIS feeble attempt, to ſpread the knowledge of thine ineſtimably precious love, and all-glorious ſalvation, O almighty JESUS, is moſt humbly dedicated to thy glory. Thou moſt meek and condeſcending Saviour, who doſt not diſdain "a cup of cold water given in thy name," graciouſly accept this offering; in mercy pardon all that is amiſs in it; forgive the coldneſs and langour of thy poor

creature, and the want of warmth of love and zeal of affection to thee, which is found in it. O ſupply what is lacking, by pouring forth thy bleſſing upon it: ſo as to make it profitable to the hearts of thoſe who read it. May it pleaſe thee to get praiſe and honour to thyſelf by it; and take to thyſelf all the glory of it; "for thou only art worthy, thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, O CHRIST, with the Holy Ghoſt, art moſt high in the glory of God the Father, Amen."

To you, dear children, for your uſe and benefit, I would PRESENT the ſmall hiſtory, of the amazing great love of our beſt FRIEND, and only

only Saviour Jesus; to know him is of the utmost consequence to your present happiness: to believe in him is of eternal importance to your precious and immortal souls; therefore I would beseech you, to read it with great deliberation: not only to read it, but consider what you read: pause frequently, and be concerned to understand, what you are reading. If you meet with any passage you do not understand, ask your father or mother, or some dear friend; "Pray tell me, what is the meaning of this?" Do not be ashamed to do so; for what you do not understand, can do you no good. But above all,

O that you may be led to pray to that Jesus, of whom you are told to teach you. He is the best

teacher:

teacher: none teacheth like him. He only can, and be assured if you apply to him, and pray him to do it, he most certainly will make you "wise unto salvation."

To his blessing I heartily commend you, and am

Your sincere well-wisher,

W. MASON.

23 OC 62

Bermondsey-Square.
March 9, 1789.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

OF the wonderful birth of our Saviour page 6

CHAP. II.

Of the life of Jeſus in our fleſh 23

CHAP. III.

How Chriſt was tempted of the devil 33

CHAP. IV.

Of the aſtoniſhing miracles our Saviour wrought 37

CHAP. V.

Of the death and ſufferings of Jeſus upon the croſs for the ſalvation of ſinners 66

CHAP. VI.

Of the ſad ſtate all mankind are in, and how badly we all behave to our Saviour 87

CHAP. VII.

Of the life of Chriſt in heaven, and what bleſſings he ſtill lives to beſtow upon the children of men 95

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the converſion of St. Paul 107

CHAP. IX.

Of the holy life and joyful death of a LITTLE BOY, who died when he was but twelve years of age 111

CHAP. X.

Of a dear LITTLE GIRL, whom I knew how holy ſhe lived, and how comfortably ſhe died, before ſhe was ſeven years old 118

CHAP. XI.

Of the wicked life and melancholy death of poor TOMMY IDLE 121

CHAP. XII.

Of the laſt coming of Jeſus to judgment, and of the awful difference between the righteous and the wicked in that day 127

23 OC 62

THE

THE HISTORY OF JESUS.

THERE are many history-books which children love to read, and are vaſtly delighted with, becauſe they entertain their minds with pretty ſtories, of ſtrange and wonderful things, many of which are not true. But, whether they are true or falſe, they no way concern them, nor can be of any good to them: Therefore, it matters not whether they believe them or no. But ſurely, that is the beſt hiſtory for children to read, which we are quite ſure every tittle of it is true. And we know, that all who read,

underſtand, and believe the truth of this hiſtory in their hearts, are the only wiſe and happy people in the world. And we are ſure, when they come to die, nothing but unſpeakable joy, and never ending happineſs, will be their portion.

As ſuch a hiſtory is of the greateſt concern to every child upon the earth, one would think that children ſhould be ready to aſk, "What hiſtory do you mean? pray tell me. I long to read it. Surely I ſhall be delighted with it." Why, it is, dear children, the precious hiſtory of Jeſus of Nazareth, our moſt bleſſed King and Saviour.

In the hiſtory of this moſt glorious Perſon, you are told of the moſt ſtrange and wonderful things, which were done by him, ſuch as no one upon earth ever did before or ſince. And what ſhould make this the moſt pleaſing and delightful to children is, becauſe it was for their ſake, and upon their account, that Jeſus came into this world. His whole life upon earth was a life of loving-kindneſs to the children of men; and his very death obtained

tained for them the greateſt of all bleſſings. Therefore he is called—the Captain of our ſalvation, Heb. ii. 10. becauſe he has fought all our battles for us, conquered and overcome all our enemies that were againſt us, and too ſtrong for us. And why was all this? O this glorious Hero, is not like other great kings and mighty men you read of, who are not akin to you, who know nothing of you, nor ever had any care about you.

But though Jeſus is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, yet, he ſtands in the neareſt and deareſt relation to all his children. He is their Brother; they are—fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone; Eph. v. 30. therefore it is impoſſible for any tongue to tell, or any heart to conceive, how dearly Chriſt loves children. And what is moſt wonderful of all, death itſelf could not put an end to his love. You may have a kind father, and a tender mother, who moſt dearly love you; but, alaſs, if the cold hand of death ſeizes them, they can love you no longer; they can do no more for you; their love ends with their life. But it is not ſo with Jeſus; no. After

ter love to us had brought him to the painful and shameful death of the cross, he raised himself;—surprising to tell! charming to believe! he raised himself from the dead, and carried his once pierced, mangled body, which had been crucified, and bore all our sins upon the cross, up to heaven.

There, there he ever lives, ever loves, and continues to send down upon all his dear children, the sweetest tokens of his never-ending endearing love, even now in this life, and when they come to die.—O you know, when sickness seizes you, and the messenger of death is sent to summon you, why then, though your dear and affectionate father and mother, love you ever so dearly; yet, alas! what can they do? they cannot save you from going into the pit-hole; for the—grave is the place appointed for all living. But if you have so read the history of the almighty and ever-loving Saviour Jesus, as to be enabled to know him, love him, and put your trust in him.—Then, O most joyful to think of! when you come to die, Jesus will with open arms receive and embrace you.

you. For he loves you a thouſand times better than the deareſt relations and beſt friends poſſibly can. And he is able, and certainly will do more for you, than they ever could. He will take you to himſelf. And while others, who never knew, nor loved Chriſt, are weeping and wailing in endleſs miſery, you ſhall be for ever happy, for ever bleſſed, in the preſence and enjoyment of him, in his own kingdom of glory.

Say now, children, is not Jeſus the moſt wonderful Perſon, who was ever born into this world? is not his love the moſt aſtoniſhing and unheard of? are not the wonders he hath wrought in his life and at his death amazing and incomparable? are not the bleſſings and comforts he ſtill lives to beſtow, far beyond what any one elſe can give to children? Why then ſure I am, if you have the leaſt knowledge of this ever dear and altogether lovely Jeſus? nay, if you have the leaſt deſire in your heart to know him, to hope in him, and to love him, you will be ready to cry out, WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS! WHAT MANNER OF LOVE IS THIS! well, of all the

books in the world give me the history of Jesus of Nazareth, the beloved Son of God, the only Saviour of sinners: For indeed there is none like it; there is none to be compared to it. O I will read it, and study it from day to day, that I may be enabled to know the love of Jesus, and come to him, and love him as my own Saviour.

I'll read and read and read again,
Till my whole heart loves Thee.

CHAP. I.

Of the strange and wonderful BIRTH of CHRIST.

SOME hundred years before Christ was born, God Almighty declared that Christ should become—THE SEED OF THE WOMAN, Gen. iii. 15. For, the devil had tempted our first parents Adam and Eve, to sin against God, by not believing his word, and disobeying his command; and so they brought sin, misery and death upon

upon you and me, and every man, woman and child, and opened the gates of hell to us all. Well, but did God leave us all to die in ſin, and go to hell for ſin? No, bleſſed be his dear name, he loved the children of men too well for that, though they had all ſinned againſt him, and were all ſinners before him; yet love, everlaſting love was in his heart towards them. Though he hated their ſin, yet he loved their perſons, ſo that he ſaid, "the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the devil's head." That is, though ſatan by his art and cunning, had got the better of the children of men, and made them all ſinners; yet Chriſt ſhould be born in our fleſh, and by his infinitely greater wiſdom and power, ſhould deſtroy the work of the devil, take away ſin, and make all his children as righteous again, as though they had never ſinned at all. Therefore, our dear Saviour ſays—God ſo loved the world, that he GAVE his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life, John iii. 16. Here you ſee, Chriſt was the gift, the free gift of God,—The free gift of God's love to loſt, miſerable,

&c.

miſerable guilty ſinners, who had done nothing to deſerve it; but by ſin were utterly unworthy of it. And Chriſt's birth was according to the promiſe of God. Pray mind the end and deſign of it. Without it we muſt all have periſhed: but by believing in Chriſt, we are ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation unto eternal life. Therefore, pray do not think little of Chriſt, and of his birth, as though it was a thing of chance, and of no moment: for it is a matter of the greateſt conſequence. It was the fixed, eternal purpoſe of God, for our ſalvation from ſin, death and hell. Therefore, it was exactly foretold by his prophet, who ſaw his glory and ſpoke of him, Iſa. vii. 14. His mother is particularly deſcribed as a VIRGIN, and the place of his birth, Bethlehem; Micah v. 2. his name, or rather a deſcription of his nature is foretold, Emanuel, GOD WITH US; God at friends with us; God for us, againſt all that are againſt us; God one with us, in our nature, in our fleſh; God like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted. And alſo this ſame prophet, Iſaiah, as tho' he had lived to ſee our glorious King JESUS born,

as

as one who was a partaker of the bleſſing of his nativity; and as a partner in the joy of chriſtians, he cries out,—UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN. And his heart was ſo filled with delight, that he repeats the precious truth, UNTO US, us loſt and periſhing ſinners,—A SON IS GIVEN; even God's own Son, his only Son, his well-beloved Son, is given to us children of men, to be our Mediator; to make peace between God and us: to be our Saviour, to redeem our ſouls to God by his precious blood.

You know, the great men and nobles of this earth are diſtinguiſhed by great and honourable titles; but what are they all, when compared to the glorious titles which the holy child Jeſus bears? He is born to the moſt royal dignity. Says the prophet—The Government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders: Iſaiah ix. 6. and Chriſt ſays—All power is given to me in heaven and earth; Matt. xxiv. 18. He is WONDERFUL in his glorious perſon, God and man in one Chriſt; wonderful in all his precious offices to ſinners; and in all his mighty works he wrought for them; wonderful in his birth, in his life, in his death, in his reſur-

reſurrection and aſcenſion, and in his life of prayer for, and love to poor ſinners, now he is at the right hand of the Majeſty on high. He is COUNSELLOR. He gives the beſt advice to all his dear children. He calls poor ſinners who are ready to periſh, to come to him for ſalvation. He is the MIGHTY GOD, to protect all his little ones from evil—to enrich them with all good—and to make them happy for ever and ever. Becauſe he is their EVERLASTING FATHER, his children are begotten to him, by the word of grace, and born again of the Spirit of truth. No father on earth ever did, nor ever can love his dear children, as Jeſus doth his: and there is no end of his love, it is from everlaſting to everlaſting: And he is always at peace with his dear children; for he is the PRINCE OF PEACE. He brings peace from God in heaven, to ſinners upon the earth. And he beſtows upon his dear children's hearts, even that peace which he made by the blood of his croſs—even the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, Phil. iv. 7.

Now, is it a grand ſight to ſee a king, in all his robes of royalty, with his rich

crown

crown of jewels upon his head, and his glittering ſceptre of gold and precious ſtones in his hand? But what is all this to you, compared to the knowledge of Jeſus? You may be in ſickneſs and ſorrow, in pain and agony; you may be in want of food to eat, or garments to clothe you, and be deſtitute of a houſe where to lay your head; but you cannot be admitted to the king's palace, nor come into his preſence, to tell him of your wants, ſorrows and diſtreſs. Well, but though Jeſus—is KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, Rev. xvii. 14. yet he left his throne of glory, and became AN INFANT OF DAYS; ſo he ſhewed his love to us, by thus humbling himſelf for us. Hence, we have the ſweeteſt encouragement to go to him, as our dear Saviour, our loving Brother, our conſtant Friend; and we have the ſtrongeſt aſſurance, that he will hear the prayers, ſupply the wants, and ſave the ſouls of all thoſe dear children that come unto him.

But where would you direct your eyes, to look for the place of his birth? to the moſt magnificent palace? Was he born in the great court of kings! Ah, no! O humility!

mility! never did it ſhine in ſo charming a dreſs, never did it appear in ſuch an amiable, ſuch an inviting, ſuch an encouraging view to the children of men, as in the birth of Jeſus.

If we take but one ſtep into the place of his nativity, heaven's wonder is before our eyes. The aſtoniſhment of angels; the joy of ſinners; the envy of devils is preſented to our view. See and wonder; behold and adore. What poverty! what meanneſs! what! is the holy Child here? born here! in this mean, homely place, where oxen lie and cattle feed? O ſtrange myſterious birth! behold the new-born holy Babe has not a ſoft downy pillow, and a fine cradle; but the hard manger was the place, that the Lord of life and glory lay in. And inſtead of being dreſſed in rich robes of royalty, he is wrapped in coarſe and ordinary ſwaddling clothes, Luke ii. 7. Thus humble, low and mean Jeſus enters our world, and appears in our fleſh.

For, as we by ſin are emptied of all good, ſo the Son of God emptied himſelf of his glory for our ſakes. As we by ſin were not worthy of the favour of God, his beloved

loved Son—MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, Phil. ii. 7. O this is amazing! As ſinners, we are brought into ſo low and miſerable a ſtate, as to be fit company for the devil and his angels; for by ſin we partake of ſatan's nature, and are made more vile and unclean than the very beaſts that periſh. But ſuch was the love, ſuch the humility of our Saviour, that he was content to be born in a mean ſtable, where the beaſts of the field lie, that he might raiſe us and make us meet to be companions of God, and his bleſſed angels. Thus low we had ſunk by ſin; thus low, in love, Jeſus ſtoops to ſave us.

It is true, Jeſus is a King;—to this end was he born; for this purpoſe he came into our world, John xviii. 3. But he tells us—My kingdom is not of this world, chap. xviii. 36. Therefore no emperors, nor kings, nor nobles, nor any of the great men of the earth paid any homage to Jeſus; they knew him not; they ſhewed no reſpect to him when he was born.

Now how vaſtly unlike to Jeſus are you; you know, children, you love all the pomp and grandeur of this world, and like better

to be beloved, and taken notice of by the great men of the earth, than you do to be beloved of God himſelf, and taken notice of by him: and it is the deſire and inclination of your very natures, rather to be rich and fine, and take pleaſure in this world, than to love God, and delight in his ſervice. This is true; and unleſs the devil blinds children's eyes, and deceives their hearts, they know this, and confeſs it too, and are ſorry to find that it is ſo with them.

It is well for children to be taught, and it is a mercy for them to know, that, as God's prophet ſays, their—hearts are deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, Jer. xviii. 9. and that their natures are ever prone to commit all manner of ſins; for then, they will be inquiring after a Saviour to deliver them from ſin and miſery. But the reaſon why our dear Saviour is ſo little thought of, and ſo little prized in the world, is this; becauſe men and women and children do not think themſelves ſo bad as they really are; but think they are WHOLE and good enough, and have no need of Jeſus as a phyſician to

cure

cure and heal their ſouls: like the Phariſee, Luke xviii. 11. they think others worſe than themſelves. But when they are once made ſenſible, what wretched ſinners they are: and when their ſouls are ſick of ſin; then they rejoice to hear of Jeſus, then they gladly come to him, and pray him to ſave them. And the more they ſee of their own vileneſs and of his loving-kindneſs, ſo much the more dearly will they love him, and they will long to ſee, and enjoy the preſence of our Saviour in his kingdom of glory. This they may be ſure of in a little time.

Well: but amidſt all the meanneſs and poverty the Son of God appeared in, was no notice at all taken of him? was no ſort of homage and reſpect paid him? Yes. Though he was treated as a poor, deſpiſed, outcaſt babe on the earth; yet as a prince and a king, he had the greateſt honour ſhewed him from heaven. He was moſt nobly attended; his ſervants, the holy angels, are ſent to bear the glad tidings of his birth. One angel is ſent to tell his virgin mother before he is born, that ſhe ſhall bring forth—the Son of God, Luke i. 35.

Another tells Joſeph of his birth, and gives him—A name which is above every other name, that name, to which every knee ſhall bow, Phil. ii. 9, 10. and which is enough to make every ſinner's heart to ſing for joy: even the name of JESUS, that is, a Saviour; a precious Saviour, an almighty Saviour: whoſe love is as great as his power, who can do all things; therefore, ſaith the angel—He ſhall ſave his people from their ſins, Matt. i. 21.

O moſt delightful words; this ſweet title, this bleſſed name the angels gives our Saviour JESUS! Without Jeſus, we had never known God to be our friend and father. Without Jeſus, God had never known us, as his children, but as his enemies. But now, in all our miſeries and ſorrows we may come to God, in the name of Jeſus, and he will ſave and comfort us.

JESUS is the higheſt, the deareſt, the ſweeteſt name to poor ſinners of all the names of God:—And there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be ſaved, Acts iv. 12.

All, all are for ever loſt without Jeſus; all were undone, for ever undone, and miſerable

miſerable to all eternity, If Jeſus had not been born. No man upon earth, no angel in heaven can ſave ſinners from hell but Jeſus: he can; he not only deſires and ſtrives to do it: but he moſt certainly—will ſave to the very uttermoſt, all thoſe dear children, who come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 25.

Hark! attend to the heavenly ſound! behold a glorious hoſt of angels hoverod over—the ſhepherds as they fed their flocks in the fields, Luke ii. 13. Angels are the attendants of Jeſus—they are the ſervants of his kingdom—they came upon the kind errand of "wiſhing joy" to ſinners, on the birth of their Saviour, as people at Chriſtmas-time wiſh one another the "compliments of the ſeaſon:" but real chriſtians mean, "I wiſh you all the joy and comfort" that the birth of a Saviour brings to poor ſinners. O the angels of God dearly love the children of men! they delight to go with meſſages of good news, from their King and Maſter Jeſus to them. O how they rejoiced, and ſang praiſes to God, when Jeſus was born a Saviour to men!

And when any poor ſinner is converted from his ſins, and comes to Jeſus to be ſaved and made holy, O this fills them with freſh cauſe of joy, and they tune up their golden harps with freſh delight! So our Saviour tells you,—There is joy in the preſence of his angels, over every ſinner that repenteth: Luke xv. 10. And—to every child who is an heir of ſalvation, the angels are miniſtering ſpirits, Heb. i. 14. They do all the kind offices in their power to them, and carefully watch over them, while they are here upon earth.

Bnt what is the burden of their ſong? O the ſweeteſt, the moſt delightful, that ever was heard on earth!—GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, Luke ii. 14. Jeſus is born to glorify God's rich favour, God's precious love in the ſalvation of loſt and periſhing ſinners. ON EARTH PEACE: between God and poor rebellious children who are at war with God, and fighting againſt the moſt High, Jeſus is born to make PEACE. Your Prince of peace is come to viſit you, to bring peace to the troubled hearts and uneaſy minds of poor ſinners. For there is GOOD-WILL TOWARDS MEN:

God,

God, their heavenly Father, wills and designs of all good bleſſings, and nothing but every good thing in Chriſt, to all his dear children. In love to them, he gave his Son for them, Jeſus is born into the world to work out a righteouſneſs, to clothe and adorn their naked ſouls. Jeſus is born to die, to make an atonement for their ſins, by his precious blood; to ſave their ſouls from the pit of deſtruction, and to make them meet for his heavenly kingdom. Thus God—bleſſed us with ALL ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt, Eph. i. 3.

Such is God's good-will to the children of men. Such the joyful ſong the angels ſung at the birth of the Son of God: therefore ſaid the angel, "fear not," O ye children of men, but hear, believe, rejoice and love. Theſe are the tidings, the good tidings, bleſſed tidings of joy, of unſpeakable great joy which ſhall be "to all people;" all ſorts of people, high and low, rich and poor, young and old. Theſe are the delightful tidings of God's love, and of Jeſus's birth.

O children, what bleſſed news is this! You may talk of this and that good news; ſurely

ſurely there is none ſo welcome, to one ready to periſh, as to hear and read of Jeſus the Saviour. If you was ſick, and your body was full of pain, and any one was to tell you of a perſon who would cure you, and make you well, would not you be very glad to hear this? or if a poor man was caſt into priſon and condemned to die, tell him of one who will get him a pardon and ſave his life, would he not ſay, You bring joyful news to my ears? but, O how much more joyful, when we had loſt heaven and happineſs, and were in danger of hell and torments, where is nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, to hear of a Saviour ſo full of love, a Redeemer ſo mighty to ſave; Is not the birth of ſuch a perſon worthy of all our attention? Is not the life of ſuch a dear Friend, above all things in the world, moſt delightful to hear of?

Well now, children, are you tired with reading the hiſtory of our moſt dear and loving Saviour? Had you rather be reading any other vain and trifling book? Indeed I know you will be tired of God's moſt bleſſed book the BIBLE, and will like

any

any other book better than that, unleſs the deſires of your heart are turned to Jeſus, and you ſee ſomewhat of your need of him, and of his love to ſinners. But if this is the caſe with you, then I am very ſure you will ſay of our dear Saviour, as your little ſchool-fellow did of a very kind and tender-hearted neighbour, who run into his father's houſe when it was all in flames of fire, and brought the little thing ſafe out. "O!" ſays the child, "I always love to ſee that dear man, to think of him, and to tell of his kindneſs. O! I ſhall never never, forget his great love and goodneſs to me, for it was a thouſand to one he had not loſt his own life to ſave mine."

So ſurely children, as you know and believe the love wherewith Chriſt hath loved us the pains he hath taken, and the ſorrows he bore to ſave us from the flames of hell; you will love to hear, be delighted to read, and rejoice to be thinking of our dear Saviour. O! the ſtudy of Chriſt is the beſt of ſtudies! the knowledge of Chriſt is the very beſt knowledge. Hear what that wiſe man, that great ſcholar St. Paul

Paul ſays—I am determined not to know any thing ſave Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. ii. 2. O! that you could ſay ſo too from your very heart!

Thus we have ſeen a little of the aſtoniſhing humility of "the Son of God," in the poverty and meanneſs of his BIRTH. When he became "the Son of man"—though the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts, yet he had not where to lay his head, Matt. viii. 20.

O that I as a little child,
May follow thee, nor ever reſt,
Till ſweetly thou haſt pour'd thy mild
And lowly mind into my breaſt.
Lord never may we parted be,
Till I ſhall reign above with thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the LIFE of JESUS while he was upon earth.

NO ſooner was the holy Child Jeſus born, but hell is in an uproar; the devil burns with envy, becauſe of the love of Jeſus, to the ſinful children of men; and he ſtirs up the power of earth, to prevent our Saviour's loving deſign. Behold, an uncommon ſtar appears in the heavens, and the Spirit of God within them, informs ſome of the wiſe men of the earth, of the birth of Jeſus; they followed the guidance of the ſtar, till it ſtood over and pointed them to the place where the young Child lay; and they bowed themſelves before, and worſhipped Jeſus, and preſented gifts unto him, in token of their owning him to be the "King and Saviour." King Herod hears of it, and deſired them to let him know when they found the child Jeſus, that he might go and worſhip him alſo.

Hut

But Herod had murder in his heart againſt Jeſus, while his tongue pretends to worſhip him: but God knew his deſign of deſtroying the young Child; therefore warned the wiſe-men in a dream, not to go back to Herod. Upon this, he was exceeding angry. What do you think he did? A bloody-minded wretch! O horrid to think of! cruelty beyond expreſſion! it is enough to make one's blood run cold, to read his ſhocking barbarity.

Set on by the malice of the devil and his own inhuman diſpoſition, in order to make ſure of killing Jeſus, the new-born "Prince of Life," he ſent his ſoldiers to murder all the poor little inoffenſive babes, that were under two years old, in and near Bethlehem, Matt. ii. O what a dreadful ſlaughter was this! but though God ſuffered this blood-thirſty wretch, to murder ſo many little helpleſs infants, which filled the hearts of their tender parents with the greateſt grief and lamentation, as was foretold by the prophet, Jerem. xxxi. 15. yet Jeſus was ſafe. Joſeph was warned by an angel, of Herod's deſign, and bid to flee into Egypt, But what a great

great honour was put upon these little children: they were the first martyrs, who lost their lives for Christ on earth; and now they are all crowned with golden crowns in glory. If you love Christ, you will be content to be a martyr for his sake too; though you may not suffer death for him, yet you will choose to have all your sins put to death, and your whole life given up to his service.

The time of Jesus's death was not yet come; he had a glorious work to do first, even to finish salvation for lost sinners. Till this was accomplished, it was not in the power of all the men upon earth, nor all the devils in hell to touch his life. For —the eyes of the Lord are over all his dear children, 1 Pet. iii. 12. He preserved Daniel safe and unhurt in the lion's den, Daniel vi. His three children were not burned, though cast into the fiery furnace, Dan. iii. Jonah was kept alive three days in the whale's belly, Jonah i. 17. And Christ shall be safe in Egypt. No enemy can hurt us;—not an hair of our heads can fall to the ground, without the permission of our heavenly Father, Luke xii. 7.

The belief of this makes the hearts of God's children very happy. But to return to Jeſus.

Now you know, the ſun viſits the earth, day after day, but it never ſhines out all at once in full light and heat, but it ariſes gradually by little and little, and it grows lighter and warmer as the ſun gets higher. Juſt ſo was the appearance of Jeſus, who is called—THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, Mal. iv. 2. His glory appeared in his birth: it begins to ſhine out with greater brightneſs at the age of twelve years. His parents had loſt him for three days:—they ſeek him ſorrowing. At length they found him: but where? in places of vain diverſions and ſinful paſtime? No, his holy ſoul abhorred ſuch vanities—his delight was in God's holy temple, his Father's houſe, which king Solomon built for his glory. Here they found Jeſus: but how was he employed there? in thoughtleſs ſleep, or idle unconcern, gaping and ſtaring about him, as many poor creatures do in the houſe of God? No: he hath not ſet us ſuch an example: he was—ſitting in the midſt of God's miniſters, hearing them and aſking them queſtions, about the truths

truths of God, his kingdom and worſhip. Luke ii. 46.

In Jeſus, (ſaith St. Paul) are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 3. Here we behold ſome of theſe rich treaſures appearing, at the early age of twelve years; inſomuch, that all the wiſe and learned doctors, and—all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers. Their eyes ſee only a little boy, but their ears hear from him the moſt wonderful things. Thus early, as he told his parents,—He was about his heavenly Father's buſineſs.

O how wiſe and happy are thoſe children, who, in their early days, know and conſider, that they are ſent into the world, to glorify God, and that they have precious ſouls within them that muſt be ſaved or loſt for ever, and are ſo concerned about them, that they are daily enquiring—What muſt we do to be ſaved? Our Saviour dearly loves to ſee little children thus. It pleaſes him to hear them inquiring and aſking queſtions about his love and ſalvation.

Next, we have a deadly wound given to the pride and ambition of our haughty na-

tures. We are fond of all earthly greatneſs and grandeur. But "as Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem to worſhip God;" ſo now "he goes down to Nazareth to be ſubject to his parents," and to do his duty in a mean ſtation of life. Here is moſt amazing humility and ſelf-abaſement! Behold, the Son of the moſt high God, becomes ſubject and obedient to mean parents on earth! Conſider this, children; you have God's command, and Chriſt's example to "honour and obey your parents." If at any time you are diſobedient and undutiful to them, you not only grieve and offend them, whom you ought to love moſt dearly, but you alſo offend and diſpleaſe our God and Saviour, who, you may be ſure, will make you ſmart for it. Very awful threatenings are denounced againſt him that—mocketh at his father, and refuſeth to obey his mother, Prov. xxx. 17.

From the age of twelve to thirty years, Chriſt ſpent not a life of idleneſs: No; he was all the time learning and doing the will of his heavenly Father; and as he was educated and brought up by his parents, ſo it is thought he learned, of his

reputed

reputed father Joſeph, to be a CARPENTER. Hence, when the perverſe obſtinate Jews had been hearing Jeſus "ſpeak as never man ſpoke," when they could not gain-ſay, nor withſtand his words, they cried out, in ſcorn and deriſion,—Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary? and they were offended at him, Mark vi. 3.

That the Saviour of the world ſhould be ſo mean a perſon, "a man like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted," and ſhould work at a common ordinary buſineſs like other men: this our carnal reaſon cannot underſtand—this our proud hearts cannot bear to think of; therefore on this account many reject Jeſus now, as the Jews did when he was on the earth: they do not believe him to be the only Saviour. So it is reported of that wicked emperor Julian, that as he was going to the wars, he met with a chriſtian, one that believed in and confeſſed Jeſus to be the Son of God, and Saviour of ſinners, Julian, in contempt of Jeſus, ſaid to him, "Where is your carpenter now? what is he doing?" The chriſtian replied: "He is in heaven preparing a coffin for you." And ſo it came

ſo paſs, that Julian was ſoon after ſlain in battle; and with his dying breath cried ed out to Jeſus, "Thou haſt overcome me."

So thoſe that deſpiſe and reject our Saviour, on account of his meanneſs and humility, while he was upon the earth, ſhall ſoon, very ſoon, ſee enough of his greatneſs and glory;—For he ſhall come, and every eye ſhall ſee him, in the glory of his Father and of his holy angels. O then—He will be admired by all that believed in him. But—he will appear in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that would not own him as the Saviour, nor obey him, as the Lord and King of all his children, 2 Theſſ. i. 8. But before that day comes, if you are not blind, that is, having eyes and ſee not, you may behold ſuch wonderfully great and glorious things, done by Jeſus, that whilſt we believe in him, as he really was once, a child, and a man, as others are; yet we may alſo be fully aſſured,—that he is over all, God bleſſed for ever, Rom. ix. 5.

Jeſus lay hid in the counſel of God from all eternity; was hid in the womb of his mother

mother for a time: and hid at Nazareth till he was about thirty years of age. He then begins more publicly to ſhew himſelf to the world, and carry on our ſalvation. When John Baptiſt ſaw him, he bore record of him:—This is the Son of God, John i. 34. And he points him out to others, ſaying,—Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world, ver. 36. As if he had ſaid, "See that dear Man, he is as meek, and harmleſs, as a little Lamb; perfectly innocent, and without the leaſt ſpot of ſin. But he ſo dearly loves us ſinners, that he is come to take away our ſins, by bearing the load, and ſuffering the puniſhment due to them, in his own moſt bleſſed body. And his precious blood cleanſeth from all ſin. O behold HIM; view him; look to him; he only is the Saviour, and there is no other."

Then was Jeſus baptized of John. Thus it became him "to fulfil all righteouſneſs" for his unrighteous children.—Behold, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which ſaid, THOU ART MY BELOVED SON, IN THEE I AM WELL PLEASED,

PLEASED, Luke iii. 22.. Here is honour and glory put upon Jeſus! O how happy, how joyful for a little child to ſay of Jeſus, "Thou art indeed my beloved Saviour: in thee I am well pleaſed: with thee my ſoul is delighted." So the children of Jeſus honour him upon earth, as his Father did from heaven.

What ſweet innocent loving creatures is our Saviour compared to, LAMBS and DOVES! We read in Noah's flood, that a DOVE brought tidings of the waters being abated off the earth; ſo Jeſus like a dove comes with peace, annd brings us the joyful tidings, that God is well pleaſed with us for his ſake; that the floods of his wrath and anger will never deſtroy us; but his love is ever towards his dear children.

O Lord we praiſe thee for thy Son,
Who join'd our nature to his own,
Adam the ſecond from the duſt
Raiſes the ruins of the firſt.
Eternal life and glorious grace,
Reigns thro' the Lord our righteouſneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

How our SAVIOUR was tempted of the devil.

NO ſooner did Jeſus come out of the WATER of baptiſm, but he entered into the FIRE of temptation:—he was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs, Matt. iv. 1. This was a moſt diſmal place; where no houſes ſtood, nor human creature lived; here were nothing but terrible, frightful, devouring wild beaſts. But innocence has nothing to fear, it is ſafe in the moſt dangerous places. But innocent as Jeſus was, he was not free from temptations. Satan, God's enemy and man's adverſary finds him; when, not having eat or drank for the ſpace of forty days, and being an hungry, now the devil attacks our Lord; no ſooner had God ſaid, This is my beloved Son, but ſatan tempts him to doubt this! yea, tempts him to worſhip and become his ſervant. O what a daring inſult was this!

then

then he puts our Saviour upon working a miracle, to ſupply his want of bread; and ſatan, who aimed that Herod ſhould murder him in his infancy, now ſtrives to make him deſtroy himſelf in his manhood, by "caſting himſelf down from the pinnacle of the temple." He preſents to our Lord's view the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and promiſed to give him all theſe things if he would fall down and worſhip him."

Here were "the luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the eye, and the pride of life;" theſe things are what young folks love, and ſet their hearts too much upon, and with theſe things, the devil cheats and betrays poor ſouls, to be his willing ſervants and obedient children. Well, but Jeſus was perfectly holy and innocent; he had no evil in him, for ſatan to work upon, as you and I have. Here obſerve, how eaſily could the Lord have put ſatan to flight? why, by his eternal power and Godhead, he could have frowned him down to his own place of torment; but he choſe to do it by the ſword of the Spirit, the word of God, Eph. vi. 17. Chriſt always anſwered ſatan with.

with ſcripture, "It is written" ſo and ſo. O what a valuable precious book is the BIBLE; the devil hates God's truths written in the Bible. You cannot ſpite the devil more, than to be often reading God's word, and it is a mark of God's dear children, they love to read his holy word:—The Lord's word is the joy and rejoicing of their heart, Jer. xv. 16.

Well, but if ſatan dare to tempt Chriſt, O children! what may we fear? we, who have hearts with a world of ſin and wickedneſs in them; the thought is enough to make one's heart ach. But it is enough to make one's ſpirit rejoice, to know that our Saviour was tempted for our ſakes, that he might have the glory of conquering ſatan for us, in our nature, and that he now knows by experience, what it is "to be tempted, that he may have compaſſion on them that are tempted." He hath a tender heart that is—touched with a feeling of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15. as well as an able hand to ſupport us under, and deliver us out of all our trials, ſorrows, and diſtreſſes. He who once conquered ſatan for us, now pleads our cauſe, againſt all that ſatan has to ſay againſt us. Thus

Thus we ſee the Father bore witneſs to Chriſt; the Spirit bore witneſs to him; John the Baptiſt bore witneſs to him; and now even ſatan is forced to bear witneſs to him, that he is THE SON OF GOD; that he was more than mere man. He is perfect God, as well as perfect man; equal to the Father as touching his Godhead: but inferior to the Father as to his manhood. O it is our happineſs to know and believe this; for if Chriſt is not the Son of God, then, dear children, we are all loſt and undone for ever. Farewell all hope of ſalvation, glory and heaven, if Jeſus is not THE SON OF GOD, we never can be ſaved; but this is the greateſt truth in all the world; Our Saviour is as ſurely the Son of God, as we are the children of men. Yea, he is—the true God and eternal life, ſays his beloved diſciple, 1 John v. 20. This we believe; this we know; this we are quite ſure of: and he ſays of himſelf, —He did ſuch works upon earth, as no other man ever did, John xv. 24. Let us next ſee, how his wonderful works bear witneſs to him, that he is, the SON OF GOD.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the MIRACLES which our SAVIOUR wrought.

THE beginning of the miracles Jeſus did, was at Cana of Galilee. Here he made known his glory. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, by one word ſpeaking, he turned clear water into the moſt delicious wine, John ii. 11. Such an art no one upon earth can attain to. And juſt as eaſy, by the power of his grace, he changes the hearts of naughty, wicked, diſobedient children, and turns them to the wiſdom of the juſt.

Next, ſee the holy zeal of the meek Lamb of God, for the glory of his Father's houſe. With nothing in his hand, but a ſcourge of ſmall cords, he drove a parcel of ſturdy fellows out of the temple of God. They had defiled it, by ſelling their wares in it. But, O there was ſuch a majeſty and power in Chriſt's looks, that he no ſooner

ſhook his ſcourge at them, but they fled away affrighted. What a work was this! O how will the wicked, thoſe who do not believe in Jeſus, nor love him now, tremble with horror to ſtand before him, when —in power and great glory he ſhall come to judge the world! But he has no whip in his hand to terrify, but love in his heart, to embrace children that come to him, and pray to him.

But ſee that great nobleman. His dear ſon lay ſick, even at the point of death. The doctors, perhaps, had given him over, and could do no more for him. The loving father haſtens away to Jeſus, and begs him to come to his houſe, and ſave the life of his dear child. Though Jeſus did not go, as he deſired, yet, (wonderful to think of!) he only ſpeaks the word,—Go thy way, thy ſon liveth, John iv. 50. And the nobleman believed what Jeſus ſaid ſhould come to paſs; and ſo it did, for his child was inſtantly healed. Such power belongeth to God only. Jeſus is both Lord and God. We are to believe in him as ſuch, and ſo imitate this nobleman, in believing all the words that he hath ſpoken.

Had

Had you ſeen that poor, helpleſs creature, who lay at the pool of Bethesda, and had not been able to ſtir hand or foot for thirty-eight years, ſurely, you would have pitied him from your heart. But Jeſus did more than pity him; he ſpoke the word —Riſe, take up thy bed and walk: and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked, John v. 5.

O how full of love and pity is Jeſus to poor ſinners! If they cannot go to him, he will come to them, and bleſs and ſave them. If you was lying on a ſick bed, or your little body in pain, Jeſus is the beſt phyſician to look to, and call upon: He only can cure the body of ſickneſs: he only can ſave the ſoul from ſin, and deliver it from death eternal. He is nigh unto all dear children that call upon him, he will hear their prayers and help them.

There were two ſiſters, Mary and Martha, and they had a brother named Lazarus, whom they dearly loved. And Jeſus loved them all three. O what a happy loving family was this! And it came to paſs that Lazarus fell ſick. Away ſend Martha and Mary a meſſage to Jeſus: And

they tell him—Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick, John xi. 3. This is right: when we have any trouble or ſorrow, we ſhould go directly to our Saviour, and tell him of it, and pray him to help us. But before Jeſus came to their houſe, Lazarus was dead, and laid in the cold grave. When our tender-hearted Lord ſaw it—He wept. Behold how he loves ſinners. O he could not bear to ſee that ſin had brought death, and all its miſeries upon us, without grief and ſorrow.

Well, but ſee, though he weeps as a man, yet he commands with the power of God: —Lazarus, come forth. And the dead man roſe up and came forth, with his grave-clothes upon him. Here was a ſtrange ſight! Was not this a work of the greateſt wonder? who can bring back the dead to life again, by the word of command? None but God only. But Jeſus did this: therefore he is God, the Lord of life and death.

Soon, very ſoon, we ſhall hear his voice, ſaying,—Ariſe, ye dead and come to judgment. Then he will ſay to all his dear children: Come and live, and reign with me for ever and ever in my kingdom; but

he

he ſeeks them firſt, and makes them to become his diſciples here. As he cauſed dead Lazarus to hear his voice and live; ſo he makes living children of men, whoſe ſouls are—dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, Eph. ii. 5. hear his voice, obey his call, and follow him; ſo he trains them up, ſo he fits them for his heavenly kingdom. Theſe are MIRACLES of grace, that he works upon the hearts of his children. Let us take notice of this as we go on. What a happy man was Philip, that we read of, John i. 43. whom Jeſus found, and ſaid unto him —Follow me. Philip finds Nathaniel, O ſays he, I have joyful news to tell you. I have found that moſt dear and bleſſed Man, who dearly loves ſinners, and who is come to be their Saviour;—Him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the King of Iſrael.

So it is, when our Saviour calls any child of man to be his diſciple, he leaves his ways of ſin and folly to live with Jeſus; and when he finds love to the Saviour in his heart, he cannot forbear telling others of it, ſaying, "I wiſh you had found the

knowledge of Jeſus as I have. O I find more happineſs and pleaſure now, than ever I did in all the days ſince I was born." Now it is by reading the word of God, and hearing the goſpel preached, that the knowledge and love of Jeſus is made known, and felt in our hearts.

O what an honourable perſon is a miniſter of the goſpel! Jeſus was one; God had but one Son, and he was a miniſter. His whole life on earth was ſpent in doing good, and preaching the glad tidings of life and ſalvation. Behold him preaching, in the temple, of the loving deſigns of his heart, Luke iv. 18. as foretold by Iſaiah lxi. 1. Says he—The Spirit of the Lord hath anointed me, to preach the goſpel, good news, glad tidings to the poor children of men, who by ſin are brought into the loweſt ſtate of poverty and diſtreſs; ſtript of innocence and goodneſs, they have nothing to recommend them to God; and ſeeing themſelves thus poor, they are miſerable and wretched in themſelves, and muſt have been for ever loſt without me; but I came to give him the true riches of my kingdom, and to clothe them with my

righteouſ-

righteouſneſs; their poor hearts are pained with grief, and broken to pieces with ſorrow, but I will HEAL THEM. They find themſelves taken priſoners by ſin and ſatan, and are afraid leſt their ſouls be ſhut up for ever, in the priſon of hell; but I "preach deliverance," I will ſet them at at liberty, and free them from every ſnare of their enemies; and "I will recover ſight to the blind," they ſhall ſee my loving deſigns for their ſalvation, and "look unto me and be ſaved;" and they ſhall behold me as their only Redeemer, and rejoice in me as their own moſt precious Saviour. O what rich bleſſings doth Jeſus promiſe! and all that his loving tongue ſpake, his moſt powerful arm will fulfil.

How ſweetly doth Jeſus preach! how ſuitable are his words to our miſerable caſes and diſtreſſed circumſtances. HEAR HIM, ſaith his heavenly Father. Children, would you read the two beſt ſermons in the world? Chriſt was the preacher of them; one of them upon the Mount, in the vth, vith, and viith of Matthew; the other was his farewell-ſermon to his own beloved diſciples, juſt before he died for our ſins,

John

John xivth, xvth, xvith, and xviith. Now these things are written that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name, John xx. 31.

Is it so? sure then, above all things in the world, it becomes children to read what is written of Jesus; and not only so, but diligently to mark, learn, understand, and inwardly digest them; to act like the mother of Jesus, "ponder in their hearts," the truths of Jesus, and his salvation for sinners. O how wise, how good, how happy, would this make you!

But let us attend to more of the miracles of Jesus. There was a poor widow, who had no husband to maintain her, but an only son, who, perhaps, used to provide food and raiment for her, as all dutiful children will do, if they are able, and their parents want it; but now behold her only son is dead. Her heart was ready to break with sorrow and grief. May be now, thinks she, I must be starved; I have no husband, no child to give me any thing. Well, but as she mournfully followed her dead son to the grave, who should she meet

but

but our bleſſed Lord? he no ſooner ſaw her, but his loving heart was moved with compaſſion to her.

Did he give her money, and promiſe to be a good friend to her? This, doubtleſs would have been great comfort to her. But he did a great deal more than this; he made this poor widow's heart ſing for joy—WEEP NOT, ſays his loving tongue, and he ſtretched forth his bleſſed hand, and ſaid—Young man ariſe; and he that was dead, ſat up and began to ſpeak, Luke vii. 15. With what a tranſport of joy muſt this poor widow receive her once dead, but now living ſon again to her arms! Surely her heart was filled with love and praiſe to Jeſus.

As ſhe could not think ſuch a thing poſſible, for her dead ſon to be reſtored to life again; ſhe never once aſked Chriſt to do it. So you ſee our Saviour can and will do more for us, than we can aſk or think. He daily beſtows bleſſings and mercies upon us, that we never aſked from him. But now, if this widow had turned her back upon Chriſt, and never thanked him for his aſtoniſhing goodneſs, nor thought no more of his loving kindneſs; would

not

not the dear creature who reads this, be ready to ſay, well, ſurely, ſhe was the moſt baſe, thoughtleſs, ungrateful creature in all the world? would you not?

Ah but what do you think of yourſelf, if you can go to bed at night, and riſe in the morning, and live all day long, without once thinking of Jeſus, never praying to him, nor giving thanks to him, who is the Lord of your life and being, who is every day, every hour, yea every moment, preſerving and giving you all things which you enjoy? This is true, that man, woman or child, who thus lives, as good as ſays, "I don't care for God, nor regard the love of Chriſt; I have no concern about my ſoul. Let the world enſnare me: Satan devour me: Sin deſtroy me. What care I, whether I am ſaved or loſt, and damned for ever." Though, perhaps, few, if any, would SAY ſo with their lips; yet it is the very ſame thing, if they ACT ſo in their lives. The Lord help you to conſider this.

The viiith chapter of St. Matthew is full of the wonders which Jeſus wrought. What an aſtoniſhing inſtance of almighty power of our adorable GOD WITH US

was

was that, when he was in the ſhip with his diſciples? There aroſe a great ſtorm of wind. The waves of the ſea ran mountains high. His diſciples were terribly affrighted, expecting every moment to go to the bottom. They cried to Jeſus—Lord, ſave, or we periſh. Here ſee the wonderful Man! Here behold the Almighty God! He ſaid to the winds, PEACE, and to the waves, BE STILL; and inſtantly the wind ceaſed blowing, and the ſea became quite ſmooth. Well indeed might they marvel, and cry out in aſtoniſhment—What manner of man is this, that even the winds, and the ſea obey him? Matt. viii. 27.

But, it is worth your obſerving, along with his own dear diſciples, there was a monſtrous great enemy to Jeſus in the ſhip; one that robs him of his glory amongſt men, and does great diſhonour to our Lord upon earth; what do you think it was? it is found in you and in me; verily it is that curſed monſter, UNBELIEF: you ſee Jeſus reproved his diſciples for this;—Why are ye fearful? where is your faith? Now don't you find when you are reading, in the word of God, of the many ſtrange

and

and wonderful things that were done by our Lord, or any of his ſervants, MOSES, the PROPHETS, and APOSTLES in his name, that becauſe you cannot eaſily underſtand, how it was poſſible to do them, therefore you are ready to cry out, "How could theſe things be? I cannot tell how to believe them; I think they are not true."

O but this is wicked, this is giving the lie, to the God of truth himſelf; this ſhews what a ſinner you are; for all that is written in his word, is nothing but truth itſelf. That was a ſweet prayer, of the father of the child, who was poſſeſſed with a deaf and dumb ſpirit, Mark ix. 24. He beſought Jeſus to have compaſſion on and help him. Jeſus ſaid unto him—If thou canſt believe, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO HIM THAT BELIEVETH. Take notice of the father's prayer—Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief; and Jeſus caſt the devil out of the ſon, and cured the unbelief of the father, by the word of his power. It is well for you at all times, to think and pray as he did; our Saviour loves to hear his children confeſs what they are, and pray to him for what they want.

But

But O! this UNBELIEF ruins the ſouls of men. Why do children commit any naughty wicked actions? Becauſe they do not believe the Lord ſees them. Why do any live daily, in open ſin and wickedneſs againſt God, though he ſaith, the—wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all that forget God? Pſalm ix. 17. It is becauſe they do not believe his threatenings to be true; nor believe at all about a judgment to come. Why did the Jews? why do any now, that are called chriſtians, never look to Jeſus to be ſaved? Becauſe they do not believe in him, as the only Saviour, but expect ſalvation ſome other way, than by his precious blood and righteouſneſs. But theſe are moſt ſweet words of our Lord's—He that believeth ſhall be ſaved. This is a moſt awful truth—He that believeth not ſhall be damned, Mark xvi. 16.

Next we read, how the very devils own and confeſs Jeſus. Behold, they cried out—What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? They were afraid of him, and aſk—Art thou come here to torment us before the time? O what a horrible ſtate are the devils in! They are re-

ſerved in chains of darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day. No Saviour is provided for them; they are without hope in Jeſus, without help from him; they know this; they have nothing to do with Jeſus; the ſight of him now, adds freſh torment to their minds; but he has to do with them: they had taken poſſeſſion of two poor men, and ſuch is their nature, that it is their ſport and delight, to make others like themſelves; ſo they had done by theſe two men, they were—exceeding fierce and terrible, ſo that no man durſt come near them; but Jeſus had commanded them to come out of them, and they were forced to obey him. O what a mercy to have a Saviour, to deliver us from the power of the devil.

But children may be ready to aſk, are any poſſeſſed with the devil now-a days? Do any NOW ſtand in need of Chriſt, to caſt ſatan out of them? Yes. Though ſince his coming in our fleſh, ſatan is not ſuffered, ſo much to uſe his power over the bodies of men, as heretofore; yet he is not dead, nor is his malice leſs againſt the children of men, nor is his hatred to Jeſus and his truths

truths at all abated. He is ſtill our—adverſary, who goeth about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. He is—ſtill the god of this world; he to this day blinds the eyes of them who believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine into them, 2 Cor. iv. 4.

He is ſtill—the prince of the power of the air, who works in the hearts of all the children of diſobedience, Eph. ii. 2 and he makes them believe this lie: That tho' they love ſin, live in ſin, and love the world better than God, and follow its wicked pleaſures and ſinful diverſions; and though they never love and obey God, nor pray to Jeſus to be ſaved, yet, for all this, they think all will be well at laſt; and, when they come to die, they ſhall go to heaven as well as the beſt.

Now though ſatan is not ſuffered to worry and tear our bodies; yet is it not a moſt ſad thing, that he ſhould thus cheat and deceive precious ſouls? This we know, there are but two ſorts of children in all the world, the children of God, and the children of the devil. And in this they

are diſtinguiſhed. The children of God believe in the name of his only begotten Son Chriſt Jeſus, and fear, and love and ſerve him: while the children of the devil do not believe in our Saviour, they hate the ſervice of God, and delight in ſin and wickedneſs.

So our Lord ſaid to the wicked and unbelieving Jews—Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do, John viii. 44. So, when any poor wretch has been ſo wicked, as to murder any body, and is brought into courts before a judge to be tried, the words of his indictment run thus: "He not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and ſet on by the malice and inſtigation of the devil, did ſo and ſo."

Indeed, dear children, ſatan is very buſy to tempt you to ſin, to tell lies, to ſay naughty words, to be undutiful to your parents, to break God's ſabbaths, to bear malice, and the like. And you have a ſinful nature, which, inſtead of reſiſting him, is ready and prone to comply with his temptations. He is too cunning and too ſtrong for you. Only Jeſus is able to keep

keep you; and to—recover poor ſinners out of the ſnare of the devil, who have been taken captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. And bleſſed be his dear and precious name—For this very purpoſe was the Son of God made known in the fleſh, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil IN US, 1 John iii. 8. as well as his power OVER us. Therefore we ſhould conſtantly pray to Jeſus—and reſiſt the devil, that he may flee from us, James iv. 7.

It is reported of a certain woman, that ſhe was poſſeſſed of the devil, and was in great agonies. Godly miniſters went to viſit her, and to pray to God for her. One of them demanded of ſatan, "how he dared to enter into one who was a member of Chriſt and a child of God? Satan anſwered from within the woman, "I caught her in the play-houſe which is my own ground, and therefore I have power given me over her." Whether the ſtory is true or falſe, it is good to mind, that God's children have no buſineſs at ſuch places.

I will tell you but of one miracle more, which our Saviour wrought, in tender compaſſion to an hungry multitude. Be-

hold how he was attended in the days of his fleſh. Bleſs us! no leſs than five thouſand, beſides women and CHILDREN, were about him. Mind that, children alſo flocked after Chriſt: That ſhould teach you, that you cannot begin too ſoon to ſeek the knowledge of him. Well, ſo eager were they, to have their precious ſouls fed, with the comforting truths which dropped from his bleſſed lips—that they had been three days with him, and had nothing to eat. Joſus knew their bodies muſt be hungry and faint. His tender bowels yearned over them. He is—a merciful High-prieſt, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, both of ſoul and body, Heb. iv. 15.

But how is Chriſt to feed ſuch a multitude? Will he open the windows of heaven—and rain down fleſh upon them as duſt? or, will he gather together the cattle off from many hills? Well indeed might the diſciples aſk—Whence ſhould we have ſo much bread in this wilderneſs, to feed ſuch an hungry multitude? Hear, admire and adore. All were filled:—He commanded the multitude to ſit down on the graſs. Five loaves and two fiſhes are brought

brought forth. Jeſus gives thanks for what they had, and increaſed what was wanted. They did all eat, and were filled, Matt. xiv. 20. There was enough, and much to ſpare. O there is no end of the amazing power, and matchleſs goodneſs of our dear Maſter!

Thoſe dear children, who ſtick cloſe to Jeſus, and ſtudy the word of his grace, to have their ſouls fed, ſhall never want food for their bodies. He who feeds birds, will not ſuffer his babes to ſtarve.—Seek ye firſt, ſays he, the kingdom of God, and all other things ſhall be added unto you, Matt. vi. 33.

There was a good man who was caſt into priſon, and threatened he ſhould ſtarve there for want of a morſel of bread. But ſuch was his truſt in the God he ſerved; well, ſaid he, I do not mind that.—God is ſo good to me, that if he does not ſend me bread, he can take away my ſtomach; and if I am not hungry, I ſhall not want bread.

Thus you have been told of SOME of the aſtoniſhing miracles Jeſus wrought. There would be no end of rehearſing all the mighty works

works which he did whilſt he was a man upon the earth. He gave—ſight to the blind: hearing to the deaf. He cleanſed the lepers: made the lame to walk: and raiſed the dead to life. And to poor ſinners, who were in a miſerable, periſhing condition, he preached the joyful news of forgiveneſs of ſins, peace with God, and eternal ſalvation for their never-dying ſouls. O—he hath done all things well! But mind, he ſaith—Bleſſed is he who ſhall not be offended in ME, Matt. xi. 5, 6.

Offended with Jeſus! What, at ſuch a dear and precious Saviour as Jeſus is? can any body be offended with HIM? is it poſſible? O yes; notwithſtanding all the good he did, and all the love he ſhewed to the children of men, yet he well knew that many in all ages would be offended at him. They would be too proud in heart to own ſo mean, ſo deſpiſed a man as Jeſus, to be the only Saviour; and too lofty in their own eyes to become his diſciples; and too righteous in their own ſight to be wholly indebted to him for life and ſalvation. O this is melancholy. So it always was; and ſo it is now, as Iſaiah ſays, Men

—ſee

-ſee no form nor comelineſs, nothing lovely in Jeſus, that they ſhould deſire him; therefore they deſpiſe and reject him—and hide away their faces from him, Iſa. liii. 3.

Yes, thus it is. The greateſt part of the world care no more about Jeſus, than if he had never been born, or they had never heard of him. They think nothing of his bleſſed Perſon, they do not love his holy word, they ſlight his precious love, and neglect his glorious ſalvation. And they are offended with his miniſters too, becauſe they preach SO MUCH about Jeſus and his ſalvation, which they do not ſee any need of; but think they may be ſaved, and can do very well without him.

Thus, like thoſe of old, they ſay—We will not have this Man [Jeſus] to reign over us, Luke xix. 14. His commands are too ſtrict for us. They would make us too preciſe and melancholy. Thus many, yea, moſt love their ſins better than Jeſus; and ſo they chooſe—the broad road that leadeth to deſtruction. But O, bleſſed now are the happy few, and bleſſed ſhall they be for ever, who know God's only beloved Son, the man Jeſus, who was born of the virgin

virgin Mary, and believe in him, and embrace him as the only Saviour. They—walk in the narrow way that leadeth to eternal life.

Well, but now children—What think ye of Chriſt? is he God's honourable, true and only Son? did he take our nature, become an infant, a babe, a child, like unto you? did he grow up to be a man, and do ſuch wonders as no one ever did, or ever can do? Did he live a life of poverty and meanneſs, and die a death of ſorrow and ſhame? and was all this out of love to us ſinners, and for our ſalvation? Say now, is not this Jeſus a moſt glorious Perſon? is he not a moſt precious, an infinitely precious and loving Saviour to the children of men? O it is heaven upon earth to know him, believe in him, and love him!

But what do you think of yourſelves? do not you think you want ſuch a Saviour? don't you ſee the abſolute neceſſity of your believing in him, and praying to him every day, to ſave you from ſin in this world, and from deſtruction in the world to come? and that unleſs Jeſus ſaves you, you would

be

be miſerable and undone for ever? What ſay you to this? Why, perhaps, you are ready to think and ſay, "It is all very well, it is all very pretty, that we have been reading of "JESUS OF NAZARETH. But ſuch a great and glorious Perſon is very high and lofty: and, like the king in his fine palace, and dukes, and lords, in their grand houſes, poor children are not ſuffered to come near them, but we are kept at the greateſt diſtance from them."

Ah, but this is not the caſe with our bleſſed KING Jeſus. Such is nor the carriage of our lovely PRINCE OF LIFE; nor the conduct of our adorable LORD OF GLORY. No, very far from it. Hear what he ſays of HIMSELF. O ſweet words! I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART. Therefore, ye poor ſinners, who are laden with ſin, and burdened with ſorrow, who can find no eye like mine to pity you; no one like me to comfort you;—Come, and learn of me. I will teach you my love. I will bleſs you with my grace, and ye ſhall find reſt IN ME for your ſouls, Matt. xi. 28.

Hear what Jeſus ſaith to YOU. Did you never mind nor take notice of the condeſcending

ſcending love of our dear Saviour, even to little children? Mark x. 14. There were ſome parents, who ſaw what a glorious perſon our Saviour was. They thought, they could do nothing better for their dear little children, than bring them to Chriſt, to have a bleſſing from his precious hands.

But behold the diſciples (like too many now-a-days) thought, "What ſignifies troubling the Maſter with CHILDREN? What good can LITTLE CHILDREN get from him? Let them ſtay till they are older, before they come to him." And they wanted to ſend them away.

O but the eyes of Jeſus ſaw the children, his loving heart was towards them, and his bleſſed tongue reproves his diſciples; for—he was much diſpleaſed at it. So if any body ſhould ſay ſo to you: "O you are too little and too young to pray to Jeſus, and to think about your ſoul." Do not mind ſuch perſons. It is very bad talk. Or if this thought comes in your mind: "Indeed I am too young: It is time enough for me to think about Chriſt, and the ſalvation of my ſoul. I will ſtay till I am older, and then I will think of theſe things."

things." Now ſuch thoughts come from the devil, and your own wicked hearts. And will you regard them more than the advice of our Saviour? Can you know him, and love him, and be happy in him too ſoon? that is impoſſible, How do you know you ſhall live to grow older? if you do, conſider what awful words thoſe are—If any one love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be accurſed, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Ought you not to be afraid to live? Should you not tremble to die under the curſe of God's word, ignorant of the knowledge and love of our Saviour? But how can you love Chriſt if you do not know him? How can you know him if you do not hear and read of him?

Remember the rebuke our Lord gives—Forbid not children. Think upon his kind and loving invitation—Suffer little children to come unto me; they cannot ſeek me too early; the thoughts of their minds, the deſire of their hearts, and the cry of their ſouls, cannot be drawn out too ſoon after me; let nothing hinder nor diſcourage LITTLE CHILDREN; I can bleſs the leaſt as well as the greateſt; the youngeſt as

well as the oldeſt;—And he took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them; and bleſſed them, and ſaid—Of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven; as much as to ſay, "There are many dear little children in heaven. My kingdom is very much made up of babes and little children, as well as men and women; and ſurely, if they are old enough and big enough to go to heaven; no one ſhould ſtrive to keep them from me, that I may bleſs them upon earth." Such is the lowly carriage of the loving Lamb of God to LITTLE CHILDREN.

Let me tell you of another inſtance of the humble, lowly behaviour of our bleſſed KING Jeſus. Hear how he makes his public entry into Jeruſalem, Matt. xxi. 7. What, is he ſeated in a grand ſtate coach, drawn by ſix fine horſes? Ah no! he comes upon the back of the pooreſt, meaneſt thing any body can ride upon. As the prophet foretold of Jeſus, Zach. ix. 9. ſo it was exactly fulfilled by him—Behold thy KING cometh unto thee meek, riding upon an aſs, yea, upon an aſs's colt; thus lowly he bringeth ſalvation to us; and the prophet bids us—rejoice greatly and ſhout

for

for joy, because our King Jesus is so humble, so meek, and lowly; O there is nothing forbidding in him to poor sinners.

Then there was a great multitude, who accompanied him, shouting with acclamations of great joy, and they sang Hosannas and ascribed blessing, and glory, and salvation to our royal King. But mind, when he went into the temple. There was his honour and great glory displayed. Behold, there were dear LITTLE CHILDREN, and they lifted up their sweet pretty voices, and cried Hosanna to the Son of David, they ascribe salvation to him, they pray him, saying—Save us now, we beseech thee, O Lord.

Now these dear little ones were wiser than the great doctors and chief priests, for they knew Jesus; but the others were displeased, and said to Jesus, Do you hear what these silly children say? What a racket and noise is this? Why do you suffer all this unmeaning nonsense from foolish children, crying you up so? Yes, yes, said Jesus, I hear them; but it must be so: do not you perceive how the Lord hath stirred up their young hearts, to own and

honour me. Have ye never read—Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings, God hath perfected praiſe? this day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears, Pſalm viii. 2.

Thus God's ſtrength is made perfect, in the weakneſs of babes; thus is the honour and glory of Jeſus advanced, to the confuſion of the great and mighty, who envy and reject him. Here you ſee, how Jeſus takes notice of, and is delighted with the prayers and praiſes of dear little children, You read, that—Moſes was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, Numb. xii. 3. But Jeſus was ten thouſand times meeker than he was; for all his meekneſs, Moses huffed the children of our Saviour and called them REBELS, xx. 10. But our Lord was angry with Moſes for that. Never, no never did our dear Redeemer ſerve any poor ſorrowful ſinner ſo that came to him.

No, he loveth them dearly: his loving arms, his tender heart are open to receive them graciouſly; and he ſpeaks moſt comfortably to them, and ſays—Son or daughter, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee; as he did to that once very wicked,

wicked, but then broken-hearted and repenting woman, who was weeping at the feet of Jesus, Luke vii. 37. and also to the man whom he had healed of the palsy, Matt. ix. 2.. But the proud unbelieving Jews were very angry with our Lord for shewing such love to poor sinners, and they murmured against him, saying—Who is this that forgiveth sins? none can forgive sins but God only. That is true; but Jesus is the most high God, therefore he can forgive sins. He is the most humble man too; therefore he came with a heart burning with love, to shed his most precious blood, to obtain forgiveness of sins. And all, every man, woman and child—all that believe in him, their sins are forgiven them by God the Father, and they are perfectly righteous in his sight, Acts xiii. 39. And when God the Spirit makes them to know this, in their hearts, then they are quite happy in the love of Jesus: O they are so full of peace and joy, and they love Jesus most dearly indeed. But yet I have something most amazing and wonderful to tell you of by and by. Perhaps you long to hear what it is. So you shall; but let us first consider,

CHAP. V.

The wonderful LOVE of JESUS in dying upon the croſs, to obtain pardon for ſin and ſalvation for us poor ſinners.

THIS is a miracle of miracles; this the moſt aſtoniſhing miracle of love; God is well pleaſed with it; heaven rings with the glorious triumphs of it; angels wonder at it; devils rage with envy againſt it; and poor ſinners on earth rejoice at the bleſſed news of it.

But O what ſhame, and ſorrow, and agonies, and blood-ſhedding, did the LAMB OF GOD endure to obtain ſalvation with eternal glory for us! the innocent loving Saviour, who had all his life—gone about doing good to the ſouls and bodies of men, was at leaſt treated as the vileſt malefactor, as the moſt wicked evil-doer.

After JUDAS, that pretended friend to Chriſt, but vile traitor againſt him, had been eating with him, at his laſt ſupper, and

and had been hearing the precious words which dropped from his bleſſed lips,—ſatan entered into him; away he goes, full of deviliſh malice, to Chriſt's bitter enemies, the chief prieſts and elders, to betray his Lord and Maſter to them, John xiii, 27. But ſee another inſtance of the amazing humility of our Lord. After ſupper is ended, behold he begins TO WASH HIS DISCIPLES FEET! but Peter thought he would out do his Maſter in humility; ſays—Lord, thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. It is too mean a thing for thee to do; I cannot ſubmit to it. But, ſaid Jeſus—If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. O, ſaith Peter, to have no part with my Lord; no hope in him, no comfort from him; then I were a wretch undone indeed!—Lord, replies he, pray waſh me all over, I am ſo ſinful I have need of it; —not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head.

What could our Lord mean by this waſhing? Not only to ſhew us his humility and to teach us that we ſhould be like him, but alſo he hath taught us hereby, that he came into the world to waſh away our ſins

by

by his precious blood, becauſe every ſoul of man is ſo defiled with the pollution of ſin, that unleſs Jeſus waſh us with his precious blood, we can have no part with him here, no enjoyment of him hereafter. O dear, what a ſad, what a dreadful thing to live and die without a part with Chriſt! alas—what will it profit any one to gain the whole world, if he has no part in CHRIST's love, no ſhare in his grace, no hope in his ſalvation? Why, if his ſoul is not waſhed in the blood of CHRIST, he is loſt and ruined for ever. O how earneſtly ſhould we pray to Jeſus to waſh us in his blood—which cleanſeth from all ſin, 1 John i. 7, and to make us know that we have—part with him.

Well, as ſoon as Judas was gone, our Lord begins to prepare his dear diſciples for what was coming upon him and them. He preaches his affectionate farewell-ſermon to them, John xiv. xv. xvi. This being ended, he pours out his ſoul in prayer to his heavenly Father, in behalf not only of his beloved diſciples now with him, but for ALL his dear children who ſhould believe on him to the end of the world,

world, John xvii. His prayer being ended, he goes forth with his diſciples to meet his cruel enemies, and to enter upon his bitter ſufferings.

Behold, in the garden he ſays to his diſciples—My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death. Now he begins to feel inſupportable anguiſh of ſpirit. See him in an agony praying to his heavenly Father, lying flat upon the cold ground; yet ſweating as it were, great drops of blood. His human nature ſinks and faints under the load of his diſtreſſed mind. Behold, an angel from heaven ſtrengthens him. No tongue is able to tell, no heart can conceive what our loving Jeſus endured in this agony. All was for our ſins. But this is only the beginning of his ſorrows. Where are his diſciples? At a little diſtance. How were they employed? O alas! while Jeſus ſweats and groans, and prays in the greateſt agony; inſtead of their watching with him, and trying to ſupport and comfort him, behold, no leſs than three times he comes to them and—finds them ſleeping. O the amazing love of his heart! he has an excuſe for them at his tongue's end:

end :—The ſpirit truly is willing, but the fleſh is weak. As if he had ſaid, "Poor creatures, I know their hearts love me; but their bodies are quite wearied and tired for want of ſleep."

But children may aſk, what doth our Saviour mean by that CUP, which he prayed his heavenly Father—might paſs from him? Matt. xxvi. 39. Why, you know, when you have been ſick, the doctor has ſent you phyſic, which your mamma mixed in a cup, and brought it unto you to take; but when you taſted it, you cried out, "O it is ſo very naſty; the thoughts of it makes me ſo ſick, I cannot take it." But your mamma told you it was to make you well; and then you drank it all up. So our dear Saviour had a moſt bitter potion to take from the hands of his heavenly Father. It was bearing our ſins, ſuffering the dreadful puniſhment due to them, enduring the curſe of the law, and the wrath of God for us in his own body. Theſe ingredients were mixed up in this dreadful cup of fury, curſing and trembling, which he was to take; or elſe our ſouls ſhould never have been healed and

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ſaved. But ſuch was his obedience to his Father's will; ſuch his great love to his dear children, that for their ſakes, and for their ſouls ſalvation, he drank it all up, even the very dregs of it; all the floods of wrath could not quench the flame of his love; ſo that bleſſed word is fulfilled—He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED, Iſa. liii. 5.

Well, now behold Judas comes with a parcel of ſoldiers, with lanthorns and torches, and weapons, to ſeize the innocent Lamb! See the deceit of that wretch Judas. He told them, mind—He that I kiſs, the ſame is your priſoner: hold him faſt. Well might St. Paul ſay—The love of money is the root of all evil. For only thirty pieces of ſilver, Judas ſells and betrays his Lord into the hands of his murderers. Innocent Jeſus is not afraid to meet them, but advances boldly towards them, and aſks—Whom ſeek ye? They ſaid—Jeſus of Nazareth. Aſtoniſhing! as ſoon as he ſaid—I am HE; did they immediately ſeize him and hold him faſt?

Alas

Alas, poor creatures, they are—affrighted, they go backward; ſee, they are all-fallen flat to the ground, like dead men: then was fulfilled what was foretold, Pſ. xxvii. 2. Now how eaſily could Jeſus have eſcaped from them? If with one word ſpeaking he cauſed them to fall thus, how eaſily could he have commanded the earth to open, yea, hell to ſwallow them up in a moment? but our Lord muſt fulfil the ſcripture; he would finiſh ſalvation for ſinners, therefore he ſuffers them to lead him away. Peter, out of love to his Maſter, draws his ſword, and cuts off one of their ears: but ſee, in the midſt of Jeſus's troubles, he forgets not to do good to his very enemies, he inſtantly healed it.

Next, behold he is brought before Pilate, where he is arraigned and accuſed. O amazing! he who ſhall one day judge the world, now ſtands before his creature to be judged. Where are now his dear companions, his boſom friends, his beloved diſciples? O trouble upon trouble! one ſorrow comes upon the back of another! when he was in his agony, they were ſleeping. Behold now, as his troubles are increaſing,

his

his diſciples have all forſook him and fled. Here ſee innocence in diſtreſs, forſaken by his friends; ſurrounded by his enemies; who, like furious lions and wolves, are ready to tear him in pieces. None to ſpeak for him. No one to take his part. Here you ſee, in the LAMB OF GOD, a miracle of patience, meekneſs and humility. Then did—falſe witneſſes, as was foretold, riſe up againſt him and laid to his charge things that he was innocent of, Pſal. xxxv. 11. How does he behave? what anſwer doth he make? Behold, what Iſaiah ſaid of him is exactly fulfilled, chap. liii. 7. As a harmleſs ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, and as an innocent lamb is led patiently, without noiſe to be ſlaughtered, ſo Jeſus—opened not his mouth. The enraged multitude prefer a murderer before Jeſus, and cry out vehemently—Crucify him, crucify him! Ah, Pilate, well mighteſt thou aſk—Why, what evil hath he done? Never did thine eyes behold, never was there upon this earth, before or ſince, a perſon ſo holy, innocent, and harmleſs, as Jeſus of Nazareth. So far from doing evil, he had none in him, he

was harmleſs as a dove, inoffenſive as the meekeſt little lamb. Yet arraigned without cauſe—accuſed without truth—judged without mercy—condemned without juſtice: the innocent Saviour muſt bleed and die without compaſſion: die upon the croſs, the moſt ſhameful, painful death! See here, dear children, a Redeemer ſo full of love to precious ſouls, that he willingly and chearfully endured a hell of ſufferings on earth, to ſave us from a hell of torments in eternity. O what contempt and rudeneſs is the Lord of life and glory treated with! They buffet him and ſpit in his face! They ſcourge his holy body, till the fleſh of his tender back is cut and hewed to the bone; like as with a plough that cuts deep furrows in the earth, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, Pſal. cxxix. 3. Then they crown him with thorns, and ſtrike the ſharp points into the tender temples of his holy head.

Thus, in a purple robe, he is brought forth as the ſcorn of men, to be mocked and ridiculed. Their cruelty is great, his patience exceeds it all. Says Pilate—BEHOLD THE Man. O what do we ſee in the Man Jeſus!

Jeſus! why, amidſt all the diſgrace and mockery they had put on him—Though he hid not his face from ſpitting; tho' it was marred more than the face of any man, with grief and ſorrow; yet ſtill his countenance is fairer than the children of men, he is altogether lovely. He is the moſt loving, moſt patient, moſt glorious MAN, the children of men ever ſaw. O happy, happy are all thoſe who believe in him! they can ſay—We have ſeen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, John i. 14.

Follow Jeſus from the judgment-hall to Calvary, ſee him bearing his heavy croſs upon his bare and wounded ſhoulders, tired with its load, he ſinks under its weight; then they compel another to bear it after him. O there were ſome aking hearts and weeping eyes lamenting him in the way: Jeſus turns to them and ſaith—Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me,. As tho' he had ſaid, "Dry up your tears: what I am going to bleed and die for, is matter of the greateſt comfort and joy to your ſouls. Though my ſorrows now are great, and my ſufferings will ſtill be

greater, yet for the love I bear for your dear ſouls—and for the joy which is ſet before me, I moſt willingly endure the croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame, Heb. xii. 2. My ſorrows will ſoon be at an end, my ſufferings will preſently be over; and then I ſhall reap an harveſt of eternal joy—at my Father's right hand. He ſhall be glorified in me; angels ſhall rejoice with me; the powers of ſin, death, and hell ſhall be conquered, and ſatan ſubdued by me; and all my beloved children ſhall be redeemed by me, believe in me, and eternally live and reign with me in my kingdom of glory." Who can refrain crying out, what a curſed thing is ſin! what matchleſs love hath Jeſus to poor ſinners! what a bleſſing to hear of him! how joyful to know, believe in and love him!

Behold, he aſcends the mount, and comes to the accurſed tree; here they laid the croſs upon the ground, and Jeſus upon it, ſtretching out his bleſſed hands and feet, and, they drove large nails through thoſe tender parts, and ſo faſtened him to the croſs, and then lifted it up. Thus hangs the bleeding Prince of life and love. (O God!

God! O Lord!*) Now—the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 6.—Now he bears our sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. O the intolerable pains and agonies which the Lamb of God suffers, while he is taking away the sin of the world! The sword of justice now takes that vengeance on him, which our sins had deserved. O how grievous, how deadly are our sins, to put the Son of God to such pain and agony! O how far were our souls lost from God, that nothing less than—the sufferings of the just for the unjust, could bring us back ot God! 1 Pet. iii. 18. Now was our Lord's own words fulfilled—As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. To what end? even this;—that every POOR SINNER that believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life, John iii. 14.

* These words should never be uttered from ones lips, but upon solemn occasions, and then with deep awe and reverence. It is sinfully "taking the Lord's name in vain," frequently, and upon trifling occasions, as many people do, to cry out, LORD and GOD. Children should beware of this.

Now which of our Saviour's ſenſes was not open to let in ſorrow? his EYES behold the tears of his dear mother and weeping friends; and the cruel ſpite, taunts and jeers of his mocking enemies. On each ſide of him he ſees a thief as his companion. His EARS hear the revilings of the multitude, and of thoſe who ſuffer with him. He FEELS the ſharp pains of the nails in his tender hands and feet; and he TASTES the nauſeous vinegar and gall.

View his precious body; what part of that is free from pain and agony? his ſacred HEAD, which is adored by angelic ſpirits, is pierced with thorns; that bleſſed FACE that ſo often ſmiled in love to the children of men, is now furrowed with tears of grief and agony; thoſe lovely EYES that were looking to and fro the earth, to find poor objects of ſorrow and diſtreſs to relieve and make happy, are now darkened with the ſhadow of death; thoſe kind EARS that were ever open to the ſorrowful ſighs and complaints of dejected ſouls, are now filled with the ſcoffs and revilings of men; thoſe bleſſed LIPS that ſpake life to the dead, health to the ſick,

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ſight to the blind, comfort to the diſtreſſed, and pardon to ſorrowful ſouls, now quiver and grow pale in the agonies of death; thoſe dear FEET that carried him about to do good to the ſouls and bodies of men; and thoſe merciful HANDS that were ſtretched to beſtow bleſſings and comforts upon earth, and that ſway the ſceptre in heaven, were now growing cold and ſtiff in death.—His whole moſt innocent body, which was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, was all over ſcourged, wounded, mangled and pierced.

O children, is it nothing to you?—Behold, and ſee, was there ever ſorrow like unto Jeſu's ſorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger? Lam. i. 12. Think and ſay, was there ever love like unto his love, wherewith he loved us. Behold in the death of Jeſus the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin; behold in Jeſus the ſuperabounding riches of grace and love. O that while you are reading of it, a ſweet ſenſe of his love may be ſhed abroad in your hearts! then you will cry out, Indeed I love Jeſus, becauſe he hath firſt loved ME. Thanks, eternal

thanks

thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift of Jeſus for us! Thanks, eternal thanks be to Jeſus for his unſpeakable love to us; for he ſpeaks from the croſs to us—Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth, Iſa. xlv. 22. After he had prayed for his murderers, preached peace and pardon to the penitent thief, and promiſed, that he ſhould be with him that day in his kingdom; then the Man Jeſus utters this moſt doleful cry to his Father—My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? O how awful! All nature now bears witneſs to him: the ſun in the heaven is darkened: the veil of the temple was rent in two: the earth trembled in horrible darkneſs: the rocks quake and are ſhivered to pieces: the graves fly open: dead bodies of ſaints ariſe and go to Jeruſalem: the keepers feared greatly, and became as dead men, and they alſo bear witneſs to him, ſaying—Truly this was the SON OF GOD, Matt. xxvii. 54. Every one of theſe witneſſes and confeſſions to Jeſus confirm our faith in him, as the beloved Son of God, our moſt loving Saviour. O may the holy Spirit bear witneſs to him in our hearts!

Moſt

Moſt precious words indeed were thoſe laſt words of Jeſus. He cried with a loud voice, juſt as he was cloſing his eyes and giving up the ghoſt, IT IS FINISHED. All that his loving Father ſent him into the world for, is FINISHED: his own bleſſed work of living and dying for ſinners is FINISHED: ſalvation from ſin, death, and hell, all, for which any ſinner is ſaved, is FINISHED: and now it is the joy and happineſs of his children to believe this, and to come to this dear and ever glorious Saviour, to receive this precious perfect, finiſhed ſalvation at his hands. Thus—as by one man, that is Adam, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all, for all have ſinned; even ſo by the one righteous life and ſuffering death of Jeſus, many ſhall be made righteous, &c. even all that come unto him, Rom. v. 18. But children may be ready to aſk, How can Jeſus hear us if we pray to him? How can he ſave us, ſeeing he is dead and buried? True, if we had never heard no more of our dear Saviour, but that he died and continued in the grave as other men do; why alas! all our hope in him is

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at an end; we can never expect any bleſſing from him. But hear and rejoice; more joyful tidings of Jeſus are yet to come!

For after—he was delivered to death for our offences, he roſe again for our juſtification, Rom. iv. 25. that is, to clear us of all faults before God, and to make us righteous in his ſight.

Jeſus continued a priſoner only three days in the grave; then like a mighty conqueror, he burſt open the priſon doors, diſarmed death of his ſting, and gained a complete victory over ſin, death and hell; ſo that now, though death is very terrible to the wicked, who do not believe in, nor love our Saviour; yet all his dear children who put their truſt in him, have nothing to fear from death: they need not be afraid to die, death to them is only a ſweet paſſage to eternal life; death comes to them with a kind meſſage from their Lord, to call them out of a wicked world, to live and reign with him, in his heavenly kingdom. This is ſweet to think of; eternal thanks to Jeſus for this unſpeakable bleſſing.

Well, after our Saviour was riſen from the dead, he finds out his beloved, ſorrowful

ful diſciples, who had one and all forſaken him and fled; and poor Peter, who had —curſed and ſwore moſt bitterly that he never knew him; (but mind, this cauſed him to weep moſt bitterly too) what were the firſt words Jeſus ſpoke to them? did he call them deceitful rebels, and ſay—Depart ye curſed into endleſs torments? O no, he loves his children too well for that, and—whom he loves, he loves to the end. Though he hates their evil ways, yet he takes other methods to make them hate ſin, and to cure them of ſinning. O amazing love! O ſweet words! he ſaid unto Mary—Go and tell my brethren, my diſciples, and Peter too, that I aſcend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God, John xx. 17. And when the diſciples were aſſembled, though the doors of the houſe were ſhut, yet Jeſus came and ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaid, precious words!—PEACE be unto you; then he ſhewed them his bleſſed pierced hands, and the wound in his holy ſide: Thoſe wounds and ſcars which he got, while he was making peace for us. O how glad were the diſciples when they ſaw their dear

Lord

Lord again! O how rejoiced to hear him ſpeak in love and peace to them! But for all this, you may be ſure their hearts were ſadly grieved, and their faces bluſh for ſhame, to think how they had run away, and left him to ſhift for himſelf, under all his troubles.

At this bleſſed ſight Thomas was not preſent; the reſt told him the joyful news, that they had ſeen the Lord; but Thomas would not believe them; he thought they only fancied ſo; and as tho' he had ſaid, If you have been deceived, I will not:—for except I ſhall ſee in his hands the ſcars the nails made, and put my finger into them, and thruſt my hand into the wound that the ſoldier's ſpear made in his ſide, when he hung on the croſs, I will not believe, John xx. 25. O how great was the unbelief of Thomas! but how much greater was the condeſcending love of our Lord! for, about a week after, Jeſus appeared to them again; and Thomas was with them then. Jeſus knew what Thomas had ſaid, (for, as God, he knows what is in our hearts, as well as what we ſpeak with our lips) and he called him; Come, ſaid he,

now

now take the proof you inſiſt on; ſee the wounds in my hands; feel them with your fingers; put your hand into the hole that was made in my ſide—and be not faithleſs, but believing.

Poor Thomas, ſtruck with ſhame at himſelf, and ſurpriſe at our Lord's condeſcenſion, cries out—My Lord and my God; it is indeed my dear Saviour himſelf, and no other. Well, but Thomas's unbelief got this ſweet word for you and me, from our Lord. Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen me, with their outward eyes, as a man, nor felt me with their fingers, in my human nature of fleſh and blood—yet believe me, to be Jeſus the only Saviour, John xx. 29.

Till God in human fleſh I ſee,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, juſt and ſacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind.

But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins:
His name forbids my ſlaviſh fear,
His grace removes my ſins.

The disciples enjoyed their dear Master's company upon earth forty days. When his departure from them drew near, he commanded them to go and preach—repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name, and promised to send his holy Spirit to them; —and he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his holy hands and blessed them, and he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, and while they looked stedfastly after him, as he went up, two angels stood by them, who said, Why stand ye thus gazing into heaven? this same Jesus, who is thus taken into heaven, shall so come again in the same body, &c. Acts i. 11.

But against that last coming of our Saviour, he is now carrying on a glorious work for his dear children in heaven, and upon their hearts on earth, to fit and prepare them, to be with him in his kingdom of glory. This I would tell you of now; but I must remember my promise to you, at the end of the fourth chapter; which was to tell you of something most astonishing and wonderful. Do you not long to hear, and know what it is? I will tell you.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the ſad ſtate all mankind are in by nature, and of their very bad behaviour to our loving Saviour.

NOW I have been telling you, ſomewhat of the amazing great love and glorious ſalvation, which our ever-bleſſed God-Man Jeſus hath finiſhed for ſinners; ſurely, you muſt ſay, it is the moſt wonderful of all things in the world: ſo it is, but next to this, the pride, the unbelief and ingratitude of the children of men, to Jeſus, is as much to be wondered at. That devils ſhould hate our Saviour is no wonder, for he came not to ſave them; but that men, whom he ſo loves and came to ſave, that they ſhould not love Jeſus; ſurely this is moſt ſurpriſing indeed! there is not one of us all, but what ſin has made miſerable; it has brought ſickneſs, pain, ſorrow and death upon our bodies in this life; the curſe of God's holy law upon our head, and has expoſed our ſouls to ever-

laſting deſtruction in the world to come. From this deplorable condition, Jeſus came to ſave us.

Well, and how do we behave towards him? How do we receive the joyful goſpel of his love and ſalvation? Why truly, we do not trouble our heads about it; we treat it as an idle tale, that doth not at all concern us. Give us any book but God's book, the BIBLE; for we had rather read and hear about any thing elſe, than about our Saviour's love and redemption, tho' without it we muſt periſh everlaſtingly. We like better to ſerve the world, pleaſe our ſinful fleſh, and do the works of ſatan, than be the children of God, and obedient ſervants of the Lord Chriſt. We ſooner give credit to any thing, which any body tells us, yea to the devil's lies than we will believe God's truths in his holy word.

Though this is moſt ſtrange and aſtoniſhing, yet nothing is more true; it is common to all the children of men. One truly thinks himſelf ſo very good, that he does not ſee any need he has of Chriſt to ſave him, therefore he never prays him to do it; he thinks very wicked ſinners may want

want a Saviour, but he does not. Another finds so much pleasure and happiness in the things of this world, and in the ways of sin and folly, that he has something else to think of, than the salvation of his soul; while others are so very wise in their own eyes, that the things of God, the truths of Jesus, are—foolishness to them; they say, these things are only fit for old folks, and children to read about. And old folks who have lived all their days without any concern about their souls, now think it is too LATE to begin, and children, they think it is too SOON yet for them, to trouble their heads about these things. So,

This is our hell, our curse, our shame:
We do not love the bleeding LAMB.

Wonderful as this is, is not this very true? O what an awful, dreadful state are people content to live in,—without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world; and yet all this while, the curse of God's holy laws hangs over their guilty heads; for as God's word tells us—We are all by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii 3. and that we—have all sinned and come

ſhort of our duty, and God's glory, Rom. iij. 23. So the dreadful ſentence of his law is denounced againſt us—Curſed is every one (not one excepted) who hath not continued to do all things which God hath commanded them, Gal. iii. 10.

Well now do you never think of this? doth this never affect your young heart? O I wiſh it did! If people did but ſee and know, what miſerable wretched ſinners we are, and what a deplorable ſtate ſin has brought us all into, they would not, they could not live ſo careleſs about their ſouls, nor ſo thoughtleſs about the love of Jeſus. No, if God was to deal with us as we deſerve, he might as juſtly ſend us to the priſon of hell, as any "juſtice of peace" commits any one to priſon, for robbery or murder.

And you know, ſuch a poor creature muſt be brought into court to be tried for his life, becauſe he hath offended againſt the law of the land, and if he is found guilty of DEATH, then the judge paſſes ſentence upon him to be hanged, and the KING ſigns his death warrant. How is that done? Why the King writes thus, "Let

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the law take its courſe upon him;" as much as to ſay, I will ſhew him no mercy; he is condemned by the law of the land; let him die. Now here no one dares tell the king, that he is unjuſt or unkind, becauſe he would not ſpare the malefactor's life.

Juſt ſo, the Lord, the King of kings, againſt whoſe laws we have all offended, might have juſtly ſigned our death warrants, "Let the law take its courſe" upon this world of offenders againſt my laws, theſe rebels againſt my government: let them die the death eternal: let them be for ever baniſhed, from my kingdom and happineſs, to the loweſt hell. Why then we ſhould have had but our juſt deſerts.—God would not be unrighteous, though he had thus taken vengeance, Rom. iii. 5. None could ſay God is unjuſt, for—every mouth muſt be ſtopped, becauſe all the world is guilty before God, ver. 19.

To be ſure this is dreadful to think of; but it is becauſe the children of men do not ſee, do not conſider, do not underſtand the deplorable depths of curſe and ruin their ſouls are fallen into, that they are ſo PROUD to reject Jeſus, ſo UNBELIEVING of his

his truths, and so UNGRATEFUL to him for all the love he hath shewed to sinners, and the salvation he hath finished for them. Hence also it is that they do not see, admire and adore the love, the amazing unspeakable love of God the Father, who hath not taken vengeance of our sins, and doomed our never-dying souls to endless torments. O behold, what manner of love is this! love, never to be equalled; love beyond all description; love beyond all conception;—God the Father SO loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. So that instead of signing our death warrant, and saying, "Let the law take its course;" behold, God hath sent the gospel of his love and favour, a message of life and salvation, and all, every man, woman and child that believeth in Jesus (mind that) shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Though we were cursed by God's holy law as sinners, yet—God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (to this blessed end) to redeem them that were

were under the curſe of the law, Gal. iv. 4. So Jeſus was made a curſe for us, that we might enjoy the bleſſing of God IN him. So the CURSE is taken away from us. But what is the bleſſing? O it is an unſpeakable one indeed! The apoſtle tells you, ver. 5.—that we might receive the adoption of ſons; that is, not only to be freed from curſe and condemnation, but made happy in the enjoyments of God's dear children.

And how do we receive this? By faith; by believing in Jeſus Chriſt; we are all under the curſe of God's law, till we believe in Jeſus. O unbelief is the greateſt ſin in the world; but faith brings the greateſt bleſſings and comforts to the heart. He that believeth in me—ſhall not come into condemnation; but he is paſſed from death unto life, ſays our dear Saviour, John v. 24. Well then, ſince Jeſus is the only Saviour, and there is no ſalvation for the children of men but in him, we ſhould eſteem and prize him above all things. For—how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation! Heb. ii. 3.

You

You know what it is to neglect or not mind any thing; if you do not like to learn, why then you will NEGLECT to go to ſchool; if any one gives you good advice, which you do not like to hear, you SLIGHT it, you pay no REGARD to what they ſay, you turn a deaf ear to it: So it is to neglect the ſalvation of Jeſus: it is bad to neglect ſchool, bad to ſlight good advice; but of all the neglects in the world, none ſo fatal, none ſo awful, as to ſlight, to neglect, to turn a deaf ear to, or to hear with indifference and unconcern, the ſalvation, the glorious ſalvation, the everlaſting ſalvation, which coſt our dear Saviour ſo much pain, agony, ſorrow, and blood-ſhed, to obtain for the children of men:—but if any love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be accurſed, 1 Cor. x. 22. that is, let him remain under all the dreadful curſes of God's law, which ſin hath brought upon him.

But now, hear what our dear Saviour is doing, to prepare his dear children to meet him at his laſt coming, and to enjoy him in his kingdom.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Life of CHRIST in heaven.

THE ſame love that Jeſus brought from heaven to earth, he carried from earth to heaven; it ſtill dwells in his loving heart; there can be no end of it; it is from everlaſting to everlaſting the ſame. His life in glory is ſtill a life of love to poor needy ſinners. His bodily preſence was once with his dear children on earth; now—He is for ever ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high, Heb. i. 3. And we are not left to gueſs, in doubt and uncertainty, about what he is doing there. No: glory to him; the Spirit of truth hath plainly told us, Jeſus—appears in the preſence of God FOR US, Heb. xi. 24.—He is our advocate with the Father, 1 John ii. 1. He ever lives to plead our cauſe, to plead his ſufferings on our accounts, and to pray for us, Heb. vii. 25, and to bring us to himſelf, for he hath ſaid—Where I am, there ſhall all my children be, John xii. 26.

So

So that all our bleſſings come to us from God the Father, through his beloved Son, our precious Saviour; the once deſpiſed, crucified, but now exalted, glorified MAN, Chriſt Jeſus. And we receive all our comforts at the hands of the Lord the holy Spirit. O this is ſweet to know! joyful to believe—Jeſus being glorified, the loving Spirit is ſent down to us. He is the token of the Father's love to us; the witneſs of Jeſus's love for us; and of his own love to us, and delight in us.

So our Lord fulfils his moſt true promiſe —If I go away I will ſend the holy Spirit, the Comforter to you, John xvi. 7. This he did in a moſt extraordinary manner, on the day of PENTECOST, which we call WHITSUNTIDE, as you read, Acts ii. By this plentiful pouring forth of the Spirit, the holy apoſtles were inſpired to write God's holy will, in his ſacred word the New Teſtament: and enabled to work miracles in the name of Jeſus, and ſo powerfully to preach the goſpel (the word GOSPEL means good news, or glad tidings of Chriſt's love and ſalvation) that thouſand and tens of thouſands, of poor periſhing ſinners were ſo

turned

turned to Jeſus, as to believe in him, and were ſaved.

It was by the grace of this holy Spirit, that the joyful ſound of the goſpel was firſt brought to this land, and that we are ſtill favoured with it. So the Spirit bears witneſs to Jeſus, and glorifies him as the only Saviour. This he doth ſtill, tho' not by outward miracles; there is no need of them; but by bearing inward witneſs to Jeſus, in the hearts of poor ſinners, and glorifying him in their view and affections, as the only Saviour who is worthy to be believed in and loved. It muſt be ſo, or elſe no one could ever know Jeſus, believe in him, and be ſaved by him. It ſhall be ſo, becauſe Jeſus hath ſaid it.

But here, perhaps, children cannot ſo eaſily think about the ſpiritual preſence of Jeſus. If he was a man upon earth, they might ſee him with their eyes; but they may ſay, What can we underſtand about the Lord the Spirit, whom we cannot ſee? I will tell you, as plainly, as the Lord's word and grace enable me. You know when God firſt created man upon the earth, it is ſaid—He breathed into man, the breath of

life, Gen. ii. 7. ſo that man had not only the natural life of his body, as we all have; but he had a ſpiritual life, the life of his ſoul alſo; whereby he loved and delighted in God above all things elſe. But when ADAM ſinned, and broke the command of his God, by eating the forbidden fruit in THAT DAY, (as God told him he ſhould) HE DIED, that is, he loſt his ſpiritual life, the life of his ſoul: ſo that he, you, and I, and all mankind, became, as the apoſtle ſaith, dead to the life and love of God—dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, Eph. ii. 1. ſo that we have no deſire to pray to God, no delight to ſerve him.

Now Jeſus came to reſtore this ſpiritual life to us; therefore juſt before he aſcended to heaven—He breathed upon his diſciples, and ſaid, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt, John xx. 22. Before the Spirit of life in Jeſus is breathed into our ſouls, we ſeek all our happineſs, and all our comfort, in the enjoyment of the things of this life only; we think nothing about Jeſus, nor have any deſire after his ſalvation. So it is with you; you are wanting one thing after another, to pleaſe and delight you always thinking

thinking the things of this life can make you happy. For inſtance now: Says one little boy, O if I had but a horſe to ride, and a good deal of money in my pocket, to buy every thing I want, how happy ſhould I be? Says another little girl, if I had but fine clothes, and could but go to ſee plays, and all the fine ſights, O how vaſtly happy would theſe make me? But ſays a third dear little child, Well, I do not ſo much mind your horſes nor money, fine ſights, and fine clothes; give me but my bible, for I find more comfort and happineſs, in reading the hiſtory of the love and ſalvation of Jeſus, and in praying to him, and living to his glory, than in any thing in the whole world beſide. Now that dear little child our Saviour loves; he hath breathed ſpiritual life into its ſoul, and ſo its young heart breathes after Jeſus, and deſires the things of his kingdom to make it happy. Is not this very plain? do not you eaſily underſtand this?

So of yourſelf: If at any time you think, "I am a ſinner againſt God. Sometimes in the midſt of my play and diverſions, I cannot help thinking about dying,

and am frightened to think what will become of me. But I have heard that Jesus loves sinners, and came to save them, and if you have sweet thoughts about our Saviour, and find in your heart to believe in him, to pray to him, to save you from sin, and from this wicked world, and to make you his loving child, so as to fear to offend him," now who do you think brings these thoughts and desires after our Saviour into your mind? It is the loving Spirit of Jesus that bears witness to him. This is his kind office. When we are reading or hearing God's ministers preach about the love and salvation of Jesus, to our outward ears, it is the holy Spirit that carries home and applies the word of truth, to our very hearts. O it is this that fills us with joy and peace in believing the matchless love of Christ to us. The holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, and bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; that God has forgiven us all our sins for his beloved Son's sake, and that he loves us now, and will love us for ever and ever. O this is joyful to believe: God loves all that believe in

Jesus

Jeſus with the very ſame love as he loves his own Son, John xvii. 23.

See then, what Jeſus hath done for, what a happy ſtate he brings his dear children to, and what comforts he beſtows on them. Is it ſtrange then, that he ſhould be ſo prized by them, that he ſhould be ALL IN ALL to them? This makes them delight to go to God's houſe, to worſhip him, and hear the word of life and ſalvation; becauſe hereby Chriſt is made more and more precious to them. We hear of freſh wonders of his love, and ſee freſh delights in his bleſſed perſon. Hence ſin becomes more and mote hateful to us; and to obey the will of our heavenly Father is more and more, the delight and joy of our hearts.

Thus Jeſus dwells in us by his Spirit here; ſo he fits us for his kingdom hereafter. There would be no end of telling you of all the bleſſings which poor ſinners enjoy, by believing in Jeſus. St. John tells us—He that believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God, 1 John v. 1. that is every man, woman, or even little child, who believeth that Jeſus was ſent into the world by God the Father, to live for our

ſakes, die for our ſins, and to riſe again for our juſtification; and ſo truſts in Jeſus, prays to him, and loves him as the only Saviour, is "born of God;" born of the Spirit of GOD; born into the kingdom of Chriſt. O what an unſpeakable bleſſing is this! Though every ſuch an one was born into this world—a child of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. full of ſin and wickedneſs, and deſerving miſery and hell-fire for ever and ever; yet he is now a new-born Son of God. The moſt glorious Lord God of heaven and earth, is his loving Father, Jeſus is his dear Brother and Saviour; and God the ſpirit is his ſweet indwelling gueſt, his leader and guide.

Thus, though Jeſus lives and reigns in his kingdom above, yet he is ſtill preſent to the hearts and minds of all his dear children, juſt as if he were now before our eyes. So the apoſtles talk of LOOKING TO JESUS, Heb. xii. ii. LIVING UPON JESUS. Gal. ii. 20. REJOICING IN JESUS, Phil. iv. 4. It was this that made the glorious company of the apoſtles, and the noble army of martyrs, ſo willingly and chearfully go to the flames, and ſuffer death in

various

various ſhapes, that they might go and live with their dear Saviour, and enjoy his bodily preſence in his kingdom for ever. O they had ſtrong faith in Jeſus, and fervent love to him! now they are enjoying the comforts of it in glory. See what a glorious number of ſaints St. Paul tells you of in Heb. xi.

Now was you to aſk a real chriſtian, a true believer in our Lord Jeſus, (though ALL are ſo in profeſſion, yet FEW are ſo in reality) why do not you live as the reſt of the world do? why cannot you take the ſame pleaſure at the play-houſes, and other places of diverſion, as other people do? Why he would ſay—The love of Chriſt conſtraineth me. I thus judge, if Chriſt died for me, I am bound, by his love, to devote myſelf, my time, my all, to his glory and ſervice. Beſides, the ſenſe of his ſweet love, and bleſſed preſence, is my heaven upon earth. The joys and pleaſures I have in him, are far above the low delights of pleaſing my carnal ſenſes. And can I expect the ſweet preſence of Jeſus with my ſoul at the play-houſe; or to enjoy the happy ſenſe of his love while I am

indulging

indulging myſelf in vain, ſinful gratifications? No; it cannot be. Therefore in love to him, and from fear of grieving his holy Spirit, and loſing the precious enjoyment of his inward comforts, I deny myſelf in theſe things. His grace enables me to mortify my corrupt luſts and ſinful affections, which I am as naturally prone to like as other people. Thus all true believers in Jeſus, ſee, taſte, and feed upon holy, heavenly joys and pleaſures, from the love and preſence of Jeſus, which others are ſtrangers to. So our dear Lord makes himſelf known to his children, who love him, in a way he doth not to the world, John xiv. 21.

Hence you ſee the religion and faith of Jeſus, makes people quite happy and joyful. Real chriſtians are not a ſet of dull, moping, melancholy things, who have neither life nor ſoul in them, as ſome ſay: No ſuch thing; this is one of the devil's lies; and they go upon the devil's errands who go about and ſay ſo: It is only to make people hate our Saviour and his joyful truths. But ſo ſatan deceiveth all thoſe —that know not God, and obey not the goſpel of Chriſt, 2 Theſſ. i. 8. But

But we are quite ſure, the word of God, which is truth itſelf, tells us, that God's children are the wiſeſt and happieſt people in the world: and all dear children that love our Saviour find it ſo. They chooſe Chriſt for their portion; and they have all things in him: all that he has is theirs; all that they want to make them happy in time, and joyful through the endleſs ages of eternity, they have all in and from their precious Saviour. To hear him, know him, and love him, this is that good part they have choſen upon earth, and it ſhall never, no never, be taken from them; for Jeſus is their life, and he tells them—Becauſe I live ye ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19. a life of faith upon him here, and a life of enjoyment of him in glory. It is delightful to know that whatever names and titles Jeſus bears in ſcripture, they are all upon the account of his dear children, and ſhew how nearly he is related to them, and how dear they are to him. Jeſus is our KING, Iſa. xxxiii. 22. to protect us from all our enemies; and to rule in and over us in love. He is our PROPHET, Deut. xviii. 15. to teach us his love and ſalvation. He is our

PRIEST,

PRIEST, Heb. ix. 11. to offer the ſacrifice of his blood for our ſins, and to preſent our perſons and prayers before God with acceptance. He is our SHEPHERD—who laid down his life for the ſheep, John x. 14. he will lead and feed our ſouls. Our HUSBAND, Iſa. liv. 5. to pay all our debts to God, and to provide for all our wants. Our loving BROTHER, John xx. 17. in our fleſh, to whom we may come with a holy familiarity to tell him all our wants, ſorrows, and complaints, that he may relieve and comfort us. He is WISDOM, to make us wiſe unto ſalvation. He is RIGHTEOUSNESS to make us perfectly righteous in his own glorious robe. He is SANCTIFICATION, to ſubdue our ſins, and make our ſouls holy. He is REDEMPTION, 1 Cor. i. 30. to deliver us from all the miſeries of ſin, the curſes of the law, the terrors of death, the power of the devil, and from all the evils of this preſent world. He is JESUS, to ſave us fully from all miſery, and make us for ever completely happy. O how near and dear is Jeſus to all his children! what wonders is he ſtill doing upon their hearts, even at

this

this preſent time, now, yea every day. I will will give you ſeveral accounts of the wonders of his grace and love, ſince he has been gone to his kindom of glory.

Jeſus is gone above the ſkies
Where our weak ſenſes reach him not;
And carnal objects court our eyes,
To thruſt our Saviour from our thought.
He knows what wand'ring hearts we have,
Apt to forget his lovely face;
And to refreſh our minds he gave
The loving Spirit of his grace.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Converſion of SAUL, afterwards called St. PAUL.

A Little after our Saviour was crucified, his dear diſciples were moſt cruelly uſed by the great men of the earth, becauſe they confeſſed Jeſus to be the only Saviour. There was a bleſſed STEPHEN, he was barbarouſly ſtoned to death. O he died moſt happily! for he ſaw the heavens opened, and our dear Saviour ſtanding with open arms to receive him to glory. Died did I ſay? No, he ſweetly fell aſleep,

 comfortably

comfortably crying—Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit, and like his dear Maſter, he prayed for his very murderers with his laſt breath, Acts vii. There was Jeſus perſecuting Saul; he took care of the clothes of thoſe who ſtoned Stephen; after this, he goes on—making great havock amongſt the followers of the Lamb; haling men and women to priſon. But not content with this, he thirſts for their blood; ſo enraged, ſo exceeding mad he was, as he ſays, againſt Jeſus and his people; that away he goes to the high-prieſt, to get authority to put to death, every diſciple of Jeſus he could find. Thus full of wrath and fury, like an enraged madman, bereft of all mercy and pity, and full of murder and blood-ſhed, he ſets out; now thinks he, as I hate the name of Jeſus, and cannot bear the ſight of theſe mad, fooliſh people, who are not content with the religion of their forefathers, but worſhip Jeſus of Nazareth, and ſay he is the Son of God and only Saviour, and talk of nothing but his ſalvation: now I have power, I will ſoon deſtroy them all off the face of the earth; I will ſoon put an end to their folly and nonſenſe. Ah,

Ah, poor Saul! well mighteſt thou confeſs afterwards—I did it ignorantly and in unbelief, 1 Tim. i. 13. Though he was a ſtranger to the precious love of Chriſt, and did not believe his almighty power; yet Jeſus loved Saul, though he hated his wicked doings; as chriſtian parents dearly love their children; yet they do not love their naughty ways. So, as Saul went to put his wicked, cruel deſigns into execution, Jeſus brings to paſs his loving intentions upon him; for ſuddenly, an uncommon light ſhone round about him; ſtruck with terror and amazement, he fell to the ground, and he inſtantly hears a voice calling to him from heaven, ſaying—Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? Fearing and trembling he ſaid—Who art thou, Lord? and he ſaid—I am Jeſus, who was lately crucified at Jeruſalem; that Jeſus whom thou doſt hate, abhor and perſecute. Beware, whatever evil thou doſt to my dear children, I take it as done againſt me. I will take their part. It is hard for you to be employed in the devil's drudgery, thou art only wounding thyſelf, like a man who is kicking his naked foot againſt ſharp

ſwords and ſpears, Acts ix. 5. Poor Saul is at his wit's end, to think what will become of him; what could he expect from Jeſus but vengeance and deſtruction? O the enemies of Jeſus and his people have great cauſe to fear and tremble! for they are fighting againſt him, who has power to ſave his children and deſtroy their enemies. O the amazing grace and love of Jeſus! Saul is not ſent quick into hell, to lift up his eyes in torment, and to cry for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, as he deſerved; but Jeſus changed the furious lion into a meek lamb, in a moment.

And he ſays—Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to do? I will now be thy ſervant; forgive me, I have done wickedly. Well, our Saviour not only forgave him, but he ſent him to preach his love and ſalvation to his fellow ſinners. Then ſays Paul—Now I count not my life dear unto me for the ſake of Jeſus; I am willing to ſpend and be ſpent for his glory: I count all things but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, Phil. iii. 8. The reſt of his life was wholly devoted to the ſervice of Jeſus; ſee what

ſweet

ſweet letters he wrote to the churches at Corinth, Epheſus, &c. and he ſealed the truths of Chriſt's love and ſalvation with his blood. And now Paul is a triumphant ſaint in glory. Thus doth our dear Saviour diſplay his power, and make known his love, even to this very day, to the children of men.

I will give you another inſtance of this, even in a little boy. I have often read it, with tears of love and thankfulneſs to our dear Saviour, who ſtill continues to make known his love and ſalvation, even to little boys and girls.

CHAP. IX.

Of the pious life and joyful death of a child, who died when he was but about twelve years old.

CHARLES BRIDGEMAN had no ſooner learned to ſpeak, but he betook himſelf to prayer.

2. He was very prone to learn the things of God.

3. He would be ſometimes teaching them their duty that waited upon him.

4. He learned by heart many good things before he was well fit to go to ſchool. And when he was ſent to ſchool, he carried it ſo, that all that obſerved him, either did or might admire him. O the ſweet nature, the good diſpoſition, the ſincere religion which was in the child!

5 When he was at ſchool, what was it that he deſired to learn but Chriſt, and him crucified?

6. So religious and ſavoury were his words, his actions ſo upright, his devotion ſo hearty, his fear of God ſo great, that many were ready to ſay as they did of John —What manner of child ſhall this be?

7. He would be much in reading the holy ſcriptures,

8. He was deſirous of more ſpiritual knowledge, and would be oft aſking very ſerious and admirable queſtions.

9. He would not ſtir out of doors, before he had poured out his ſoul to the Lord in prayer.

10. When he eat any thing, he would be ſure to lift up his heart unto the Lord for a bleſſing upon it; and when he had moderately refreſhed himſelf by eating, he would

would not forget to acknowledge God's goodneſs in feeding of him.

11. He would not lie down in his bed till he had been upon his knees; and when ſometimes he had forgotten his duty, he would quickly get out of his bed, and kneeling down upon his bare knees, aſk God forgiveneſs of that ſin.

12. He would rebuke his brethren, if they were at any time too haſty at their meals, and did eat without aſking a bleſſing; his check was this, "Dare you do thus? God be merciful to us, this bit of bread might choke us."

13. His ſentences were wiſe and weighty, and might well become ſome antient chriſtian.

14. His ſickneſs was a lingering diſeaſe, againſt which, to comfort him, one tells him of poſſeſſions that muſt fall to his portion; "And what are they? (ſaid he) I had rather have the kingdom of heaven, than a thouſand ſuch inheritances."

15. When he was ſick, he ſeemed much taken up with heaven, and aſked very ſerious queſtions about the nature of his ſoul.

16. After he was pretty well ſatisfied about that, he enquired how his ſoul might be ſaved; the anſwer being made, "By the applying of Chriſt's merit by faith;" he was pleaſed with the anſwer, and was ready to give any one that ſhould deſire it, an account of his hope.

17. Being aſked whether he had rather live or die? he anſwered, "I deſire to die, that I may go to my Saviour."

18. His pains increaſing upon him, one aſked him, whether he would rather ſtill endure thoſe pains, or forſake Chriſt? "Alas, (ſaid he) I know not what to ſay, being a child; for theſe pains may ſtagger a ſtrong man, but I will ſtrive to endure the beſt I can." Upon this he called to mind that martyr THOMAS BILNEY, who being in priſon, the night before his burning, put his finger into the candle, to know how he could endure the fire. "O (ſaid the child) had I lived then, I would have run through the fire to have gone to Chriſt."

19. His ſickneſs laſted long, and at leaſt three days before his death he propheſied his departure, and not only that he muſt die, but the very day. "On the Lord's day,

day, (ſaid he) look to me;" neither was this a word of courſe, which you may gueſs by his often repetition, every day aſking, till the day came indeed. "What, is Sunday come?" At laſt the looked for day came on; and no ſooner had the ſun beautified that morning with its light, but he falls into a trance, his eyes were fixed, his face chearful, his lips ſmiling, his hands and face claſped in a bow, as if he would have embraced ſome bleſſed angel that was at hand to receive his ſoul. But he comes to himſelf, and tells them how he ſaw the ſweeteſt body that ever eyes beheld, who bid him to be of good cheer, for he muſt preſently go with him.

20. One that ſtood near him, as now ſuſpecting the time of his diſſolution nigh, bid him ſay, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit, which is thy due; for why, thou haſt redeemed it, O Lord, my God, moſt true."

21. The laſt words, which he ſpake, were exactly theſe: "Pray, pray, pray, nay, yet pray; and the more prayers the better, all proſpers; God is the beſt phyſician; into thy hands I commend my ſpirit.

rit. O Lord Jesus receive my soul: now close mine eyes: forgive me, father, mother, brother, sister, all the world. Now I am well, my pain is almost gone, my joy is at hand. Lord, have mercy on me. O Lord, receive my soul unto thee." And thus he yielded up his spirit unto the Lord, when he was about twelve years old.

(This narrative was taken out of Mr. Ambrose's Life's Lease.)

Next I will tell you of a dear little GIRL, whom I knew, and whom our Saviour called to the knowledge of himself when she was very young, and whom he has lately taken out of a naughty world to live and reign with him in heaven.

CHAP. X.

Of the Life of a gracious little GIRL; and how joyfully she died.

SHE lived with her Aunt, who loved her as dearly as if she had been her own child. Her talk and behaviour were very sweet and engaging. She early discovered, that her mind was under some impressions of the truths of God's word.

She

She loved to read the Bible. She would leave off her little amuſements, to give ear to chriſtian converſation: and after ſhe had been hearing ſuch diſcourſe, would aſk ſuitable queſtions, ſeeming to be very deſirous of being inſtructed in the truths of God. She abhorred lying; and when aſked any queſtions, ſhe uſed to ſay, "Indeed I am ſure, I always tell the truth."

She liked to go to the houſe of God, and was delighted to hear the miniſters of Jeſus preach about his love and ſalvation. One ſabbath-day, being left at home with the maid-ſervant, this dear child wanted the maid to go to God's houſe with her; but ſhe, being buſy and not inclined to go out, the dear little creature would not ſtay at home, but went by herſelf, and ſeemed vaſtly pleaſed, in giving ſome account of the ſermon ſhe had been hearing.

The ſervant having repeated a fault, which ſhe had once before been guilty of, and her miſtreſs being angry at it, this ſweet child came to her aunt and ſaid, "Poor MOLLY is very ſorry for what ſhe has done, and you muſt forgive her, for you know, our Saviour ſays, we muſt for-

give

give until ſeventy times ſeven." Here was a delightful inſtance, both of the loving peaceable temper of this little child, her early knowledge of our Saviour's doctrine, and her ſuitable applying of it.

It pleaſed the Lord to afflict her with a lingering illneſs, which ſhe bore with great patience and ſubmiſſion to his will. Being in great pain and agony of body, ſhe cried out. Her aunt ſaid, I hope, my dear, the Lord will ſtrengthen you, and give you patience. Juſt as if ſhe checked herſelf for crying out, and had preſent ſupport given to her mind, ſhe replied, "He does," and immediately lay in great compoſure.

A miniſter, who had often viſited and prayed by her, came to ſee her, and aſked if he ſhould pray by her then. Poor dear ſoul, her body being in great pain, ſhe replied, "I am ſo very ill I cannot bear to hear any body ſpeak." After he was gone, and ſhe was a little eaſier, ſhe bemoaned herſelf that ſhe did not let him pray by her, often ſaying ſhe was ſorry for it; but hoped he would come and ſee her again.

Before a miniſter prayed by her, he aſked her, "Shall I pray to God to make you well,

well, and that you may live longer?" Mind her anſwer, you dear children. She was not afraid to die; no: our dear Saviour had taken away the fear of death from her; yea, ſhe longed to die, that ſhe might live with him; for ſhe ſtedfaſtly fixed her dear eyes as though ſhe was looking up to Jeſus, whom ſhe had ſet her heart upon as her treaſure, and deſiring to be with him; ſhe replied, "No, don't pray that I may live; I had rather die and go to heaven."

One day, finding herſelf grow worſe, ſhe ſaid to her aunt, "I ſhall die, but pray don't you grieve for me, for it is better to die, and be with Jeſus; becauſe you know he ſays—Suffer little children to come unto me; for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven." Theſe words dwelt much upon her mind: they are the text of A PLAIN SERMON FOR LITTLE CHILDREN, which I publiſhed; and which ſhe took great delight in reading.

She ſaid to thoſe about her, "I ſhall keep my ſabbath in heaven." A little before ſhe died, ſhe called her dear relations and friends about her dying bed, and in a moſt

moſt ſweet and affecting manner, took her laſt leave and parting farewell of each of them with great chearfulneſs and joy: and ſaid, "I am going to the joys of heaven, you will ſoon ſee me dead: but then I ſhall be in heaven as white as ſnow." We may comfortably hope, and joyfully believe, ſhe fell aſleep in the arms of our dear Saviour, who had redeemed her to God by his precious blood, and had taught her young heart to know him and love him upon earth, and made her ſoul ripe for glory. So that now ſhe is gone to live and reign with him, in his kingdom in heaven, to praiſe and glorify him for ever and ever. She died on Sabbath-day, Nov. 16. 1766, wanting one month of ſeven years.

Thus you ſee how our dear Saviour loves children, even LITTLE children; and what great things he does upon their young hearts. Now, do you deſire to live and die as ſhe did? Why, Jeſus is—the ſame Lord over all, and he is rich in mercy, to ſave all that call upon him. Yea, and his Spirit of truth hath given us this precious promiſe—Whoſoever, young or old, rich or poor, ſmall or great, whoſoever ſhall

call

call upon the name of the Lord Jeſus ſhall be ſaved, Rom. x. 12, 13. I wiſh you to read A precious Teſtimony for Jeſus, from two children, who died lately full of joy, which I publiſhed.

CHAP. XI.

Of the wicked life and unhappy death of one who lived without the fear of God, and the knowledge of our Saviour in the world.

BUT ſee, how vaſtly different was the wicked life and melancholy death of poor Tommy Idle. He was born of parents who lived in good credit: they put him to ſchool, and gave him good advice. But when he was a child, he learned to tell lies, ſay naughty words, and take God's name in vain. If any body reproved him for it, he uſed to ſay, "Well, what is that to you." He did not like any thing that was good. He hated to read his Bible; never ſaid his prayers; abhorred to go to church; and would rather ſpend the Sabbath with other idle boys in the ſtreets. He was very undutiful to his parents; they

tried to teach him better; but all was in vain, for as he grew up, he became worſe and worſe.

When he was put apprentice he behaved badly; uſed to ſtay of his errands, and neglect his maſter's buſineſs, &c. When he was out of his time, he was very idle, lazy and wicked. He uſed to keep company with others as bad as himſelf; for you know birds of a feather will flock together. He uſed to make game of God's people, and laugh at religion. Thus he went on, from one way of wickedneſs to another. One night he got to gaming, and loſt all that he had; and coming home late, he was decoyed into a very bad houſe; here he met with a ſet of wretches, who perſuaded him to live as they did, by robbing and ſtealing. His affairs being bad, like his wicked diſpoſition, and as he had caſt off all "fear of God," he joined them. But, alas, he did not reign long; Juſtice ſoon overtook him; he was taken and committed to goal for a robbery, tried, and condemned to be hanged. So the way of ſin is down hill; the wicked run faſt to deſtruction.

Poor

Poor unhappy creature! there was he ſhut up in a dark-diſmal dungeon, loaded with fetters, wringing his hands, and bemoaning his melancholy doom. But had you ſeen, when his dear father and mother came to ſee him in the priſon: O dear! ſurely it would have made your heart ake, and a flood of tears guſh from your eyes. There was the tender mother embracing, hanging upon, and weeping in an agony over a dear but naughty child, whom ſhe brought into the world, whoſe paps he had ſucked, and whom ſhe had tenderly brought up! There was the affectionate father, wringing his hands; lifting up his eyes to heaven, while ſtreams of tears flowed down his aged cheeks; crying out, "O what do I live to ſee! what am I called to ſuffer! O my ſon, my ſon, would to God thou hadſt never been born! O that thou hadſt died whilſt thou hanged yet upon thy mother's breaſt!—O my diſtreſs is greater than I can bear!"

Then to ſee and hear the bitter cries and lamentations of poor Tommy: Forgive me, O my dear father! forgive me, O my dear mother! O that I had followed your good

inſtructions! O that I had taken your good advice! but now, alas, it is too late. Vile wretch that I have been, thus to bring myſelf to this ſhameful end; thus to bring down your grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave.

But tongue cannot expreſs, heart cannot conceive, nor pen deſcribe, the moſt affecting ſcene of ſorrow, diſtreſs and agony, when his father and mother took their laſt, parting farewell of their dear, but unhappy, wicked ſon; never, never to ſee him more in this world.

O that his life and death may be a warning to children! may the following letter to his parents, be a leſſon of inſtruction to you.

Dear Father and Mother,

WITH a ſorrowful heart, weeping eyes, and a trembling hand, I write to inform you, that my dead warrant is come down, and I am to die next Wedneſday. O what ſhall I do! O what will become of my precious ſoul! I am in the greateſt diſtreſs, to think what I have brought upon myſelf, and upon you. Pray

for

for me; desire all good people to pray for me; O how sadly I have lived, without praying to God for myself. O that young folks may take warning by my wicked life, and shameful death! tell them, tell all the world, that the heinous sin of sabbath-breaking, and neglecting the worship and service of God, is the forerunner of all other sins. Disobedience to God's commands, and undutifulness to you, my dear parents, now lie very heavy upon my mind. I am to be cut off in the prime of life; my days have been few; my sins are many and great; O that God may pardon them all, for Christ's sake! Forgive me, my dear parents, for all the sorrow and shame I have brought upon you. Farewell, for ever farewell, from

Your most sorrowful, distressed,
and undutiful son,
T. IDLE.

Poor Tommy was hanged, and he went out of the world, crying, Lord Jesus receive my soul! But O how happy are all those, who live in the world, praying to Jesus from day to day, to bless and save their

ſouls. Every body, when they come to die, deſire to—die the death of the righteous; but they only can expect it, who live the life of the righteous; that is (as St. Paul ſays he did, and as all real chriſtians now do)—a life of faith upon the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himſelf for us, Gal. ii. 20.

O how vaſtly different are the holy lives and happy deaths of thoſe dear children, who love and ſerve our Saviour, to thoſe who are ignorant of him, and live and die in the ſervice of ſin and ſatan! This you ſee ſomewhat of in this world; but what an awful difference will there be in the world to come! This, you and I, dear children, ſhall be witneſſes to. Yea more, we ſhall be partakers of the joys of the bleſſed, or the miſeries of the curſed, for ever and ever. Let us therefore conſider; and O that we may conſider it with the deepeſt thought and attention!

When Chriſt the judgment-ſeat aſcends,
And bids the world appear,
Thrones are prepar'd for all his FRIENDS,
Who humbly lov'd him HERE.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the laſt coming of JESUS to judgment.

YOU know, when the diſciples ſaw Jeſus go up into heaven, the angels told them, that—he ſhould ſo come again in like manner, Acts i. 11. You may be ready to aſk, What then, will our Saviour be born into our world again, and ſuffer, and bleed, and die once more? O no! tho' he will come again, yet not as MARY's child, as the CARPENTER's SON, as the deſpiſed NAZARENE, to be crowned with thorns, to be rejected of men, to be mocked, derided, and ſpit upon, to be wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities.

But he will come, in the moſt awful pomp, and amazing grandeur, with majeſty and great glory; and as his angels uſhered in his birth, when he became a little child upon earth, ſo they ſhall attend him, when he comes, as Lord and judge of all. You are told of the particular manner of his coming, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16.

The

The Lord Jeſus himſelf in his human nature, ſhall viſibly deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the arch-angel, the moſt loud and tremendous ſummons, and the laſt trumpet ſhall be blown, and the voice of Jeſus ſhall be heard; and like as he called his beloved friend Lazarus from the dead, in the days of his fleſh; ſo now, all his dear children ſhall hear his delightful voice:—for the dead in Chriſt (that is, all that believed in Jeſus as the only Saviour) ſhall riſe firſt, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16.

O how awfully glorious, yet moſt pleaſing and delightful to all his dear children, will this ſight and appearing of Jeſus be! though they had never ſeen his moſt dear and bleſſed perſon with their bodily eyes; yet believing in him with their hearts, they loved him on earth.

This is the man, the exalted MAN,
Whom we unſeen adore;
But when our eyes behold his face,
Our hearts will love him more.

Love him! O who is able fully to think of, who is able fully to tell of, the tranſports of joy, which all his redeemed ones will

will be filled with, at the ſight of their moſt beloved Saviour? Even now, this is moſt ſweet, moſt raviſhing, but to think of.

Then, will Jeſus glory in, and rejoice over, all his ranſomed, ſaved children; and will preſent them with the greateſt delight to the Father—Behold me and all the children thou haſt given me, Heb. ii. 13. I have loſt none; here they are all, fully redeemed, perfectly juſtified, completely ſaved and brought to glory. O then how will his heavenly Father ſmile, approve and love! then ſhall all his dear children, liſt up their heads with joy; behold his ſmiling face with comfort, and hear his delightful voice with triumph; ſaying—Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, come, to the cloſeſt embraces of my love, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world, Matt. xxv. 34. When they were upon earth, it was their grief, that they did not love Jeſus more; but now, their hearts will be as full of love to Jeſus as ever they can hold: and with their moſt joyful tongues, they will unite in ſinging—Unto him that hath loved

us,

us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God, and his Father: Unto this bleſſed, lovely, loving Jeſus, be glory and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen. Rev. i. 5, 6.

Thus ſhall they be for ever with the Lord, loving, and bleſſing, and adoring him: admiring the wonders of his ineſtimably precious love, and rejoicing, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory, in the enjoyment of all his glorious ſalvation. All that believe in Jeſus, know a little of this even now: it is this creates our heaven upon earth; but it hath not entered into our hearts, FULLY to conceive the glory and bleſſedneſs, which he hath prepared for them that love him. This we muſt die to know perfectly.

But O, where ſhall now the wicked and ungodly appear! how tremendouſly dreadful will the ſight of Jeſus be to them.—The dead, both ſmall and great, muſt ſtand before the SON OF MAN; now every eye ſhall ſee HIM; every knee bow before HIM; and every tongue confeſs HIM: while angels adore him, devils will tremble

tremble at the ſight of him; while his ſaints look on him with joy and comfort, the wicked will hide away their faces, in dread and terror; for, O heart-rending thought, they muſt appear at Jeſus's left hand! In this life they would not know him, believe in him, nor love and ſerve him; but they loved their ſins better than Chriſt; they found more pleaſure in the ſinful vanities of this world than in Chriſt; they choſe the ſervice of ſin and ſatan, rather than to ſerve the Lord Chriſt. But now, they muſt ſtand forth, to hear their awful dreadful doom: now, Jeſus will ſay—Depart from ME, I never knew YOU, Matt. vii. 23.

What, are they dumb? they have nothing to ſay for themſelves: do they now own Jeſus, as the only Saviour, and cry to him to ſave them? No, alas! though this would be too late now; yet ſee even now, they are too proud and ſtubborn for that: inſtead of this—The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, rich and poor, cry to the mountains and rocks,

Fall

Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand! Rev. iv. 16. O vain and fooliſh attempt, to think of hiding themſelves from the preſence of Jeſus!

But ſo they acted in this life; they could not bear to think of Jeſus, to hear of his love and ſalvation; to believe in his name, and ſerve him. This, they thought, would damp their ſpirits, deſtroy their comforts, and put an end to all their mirth and jollity, in the enjoyment of the things of this world. So it is, that ſin blinds the eyes and deceives the hearts; and it makes people act as fooliſh as ADAM and EVE did, when they had ſinned, they fled away, and thought to hide themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God, Gen. iii. 8. but that is impoſſible, though many, yea moſt, are apt to think ſo fooliſhly, becauſe they do not ſee God, they think God does not ſee them. Do you never think ſo? O but this is moſt ridiculous; this cometh from the

unbelief

unbelief of our hearts: the eyes of the Lord are ever upon you: he is about your path and about your bed, and ſeeth all your ways: nothing can be hid from him: the moſt ſecret thoughts of your heart—all things are naked and open to his ſight, Heb. iv. 13. and he will bring every ſecret thing into judgment, Eccleſ. xii. 14.

But our Saviour tells us of ſome, who in the laſt day, will call him LORD, LORD, profeſſing to know him, and will uſe pleas and arguments with him, as though they were to ſay, We have been called by thy name, CHRISTIANS; and have been baptized into the profeſſion of thy religion; and have done wonderful works in thy name, Matt. vii. 22. Luke xii. 26. And ſo they truſted in theſe things, and becauſe of theſe things they hoped to be ſaved. O but this is pride. This is to ſet up other ſaviours beſides Jeſus; therefore they never knew him aright, believed on him in truth; never loved him in ſincerity, nor ſerved and glorified him in uprightneſs of heart. Therefore

he will ſay to them—I never knew you, as poor broken hearted ſinners, ſorry for, and repenting of your ſins at my feet: believing in ME as the only Saviour, and praying to ME to ſave you; depart, be gone from my ſight, ye workers of iniquity. Though you call me LORD, yet ye hated my holy ſervice; ye loved ſin, ye lived and died under the power of ſin; my holy ways were hateful to you; but to work iniquity was your delight. O how ſhocking, how dreadful to hear this awful ſentence from him—Go, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal, Matt. xxv. 46.

Now all theſe awful things will certainly come to paſs; this we are quite ſure of; there is nothing in all the world more certain; for God hath told us ſo in his word, and it is impoſſible for God to lie. Mind then, this life is called a day of grace and ſalvation, and Jeſus is now the meek and lowly Saviour; but

the

the day of judgment to the wicked, is a day of wrath and vengeance; and the meekneſs of the LAMB will then be changed, into the fury of the LION againſt them.

But few like to think of theſe things as they ought. It is reported of a certain chriſtian king of HUNGARY, that he was once very ſad and melancholy: his brother aſked him what ailed him? "O brother, ſaid he, I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before him in the great day of judgment." The brother replied, "Pho, theſe are only MELANCHOLY FITS;" and tried to laugh him out of them. The king made him no anſwer. The cuſtom of that country was, that if the executioner of juſtice ſounded a trumpet before any man's door, that man was, without more ado, to be put to death. The king, in the dead of the night, ſends his DEATH'S-MAN, to ſound his trumpet before his brother's door; who, ſeeing and hearing the meſſenger of death, he ſprings into his brother's preſence, pale and trembling

bling falls down before him, and asks wherein he had offended, and why he must die? "O brother, replies the king, thou hast loved and never offended me: but is the sight of my execution so dreadful to thee? Why cannot you laugh and joke away the thoughts from yourself, as you tried to do by my thoughts of judgment? Should not then such sinners as you and I are, fear to be brought to the judgment-seat of Christ?"

Thus we see the difference between talking of things, which we suppose are at a distance from us, and feeling the importance of them upon our own minds. We may improve this story to this end, that no one should laugh us out of, nor drive from our minds, suitable and serious thoughts, concerning the welfare and salvation of our precious souls. For what a precious Saviour is Jesus! To hear of him is our greatest mercy, to believe in him is our truest happiness, to love him is our heaven upon earth, and to serve and glorify him our highest honour.

O then,

O then, while many are ſeeking all their comfort in this world, living in ſin and wickedneſs; while others are placing all their hopes of ſalvation in the works of their hands, and truſting to them as their ſaviour; moſt bleſſed and happy are thoſe children, who are taught to ſeek all their happineſs in Jeſus, and place all their hopes in his ſalvation; ever ſaying—Beſides thee, O JESUS, there is no Saviour; we have no king but Jeſus. Hoſannah to the Son of David! Bleſſed is he that cometh to ſave us! Hoſanna in the higheſt.

This wond'rous Man of whom we tell,
He is the true almighty God;
He bought our ſouls from death and hell
With precious price his own heart's blood.

Come, then, repenting ſinner come,
Jeſus approach with humble faith;
Owe what thou wilt, the total ſum
Is fully cancell'd by his death.

His blood can cleanſe the blackeſt ſoul,
And waſh our fouleſt guilt away;
Chriſt will preſent us found and whole,
In the laſt awful judgment-day.

Bleſſings for ever on the Lamb,
Who bore the curſe for wretched man!
Let angels ſound his ſacred name,
And ev'ry creature ſay Amen.

23 OC 62

FINIS.